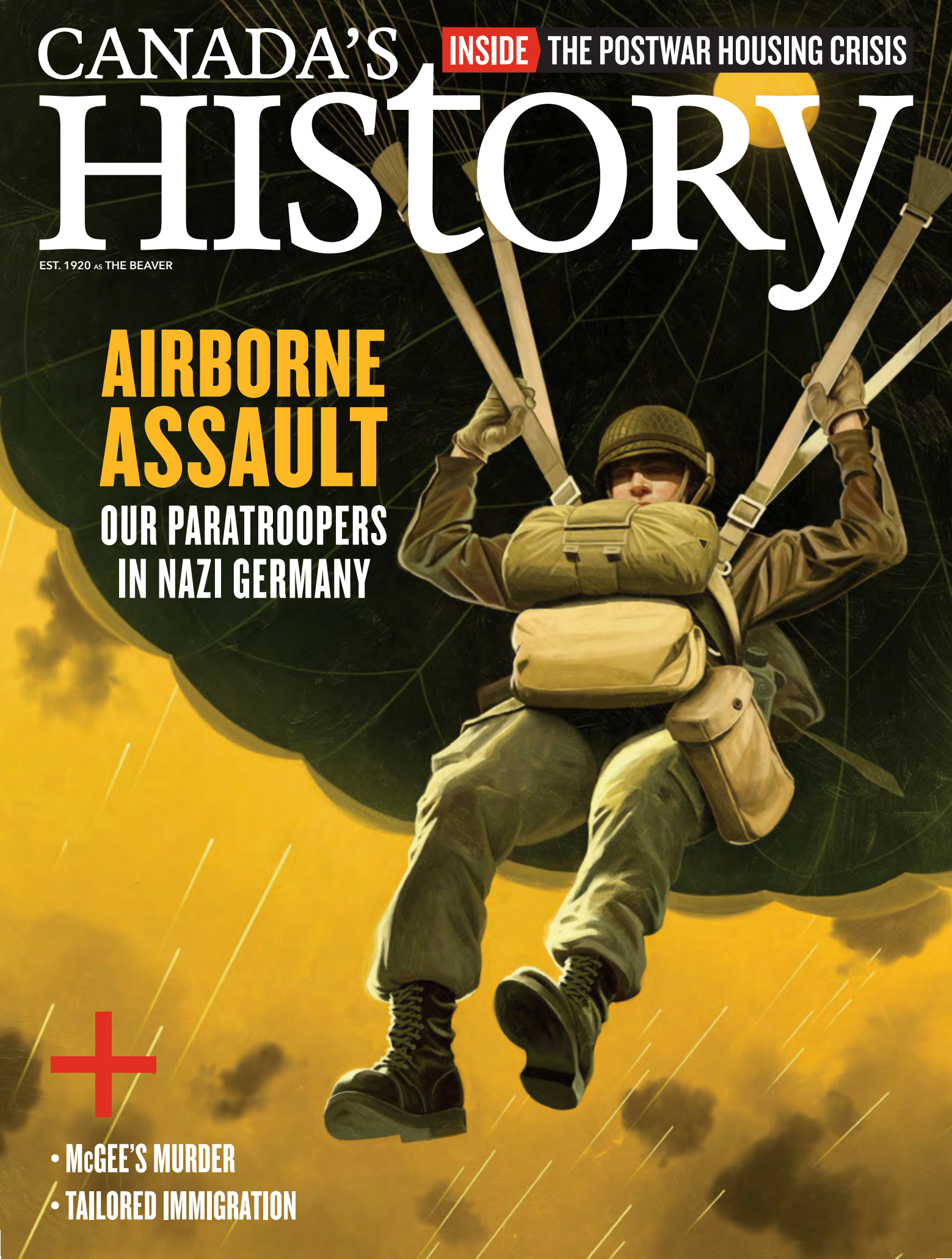
CANADA'S HISTORY

INSIDE THE POSTWAR HOUSING CRISIS

EST. 1920 AS THE BEAVER



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OUR PARATROOPERS IN NAZI GERMANY

+

- McGEE'S MURDER
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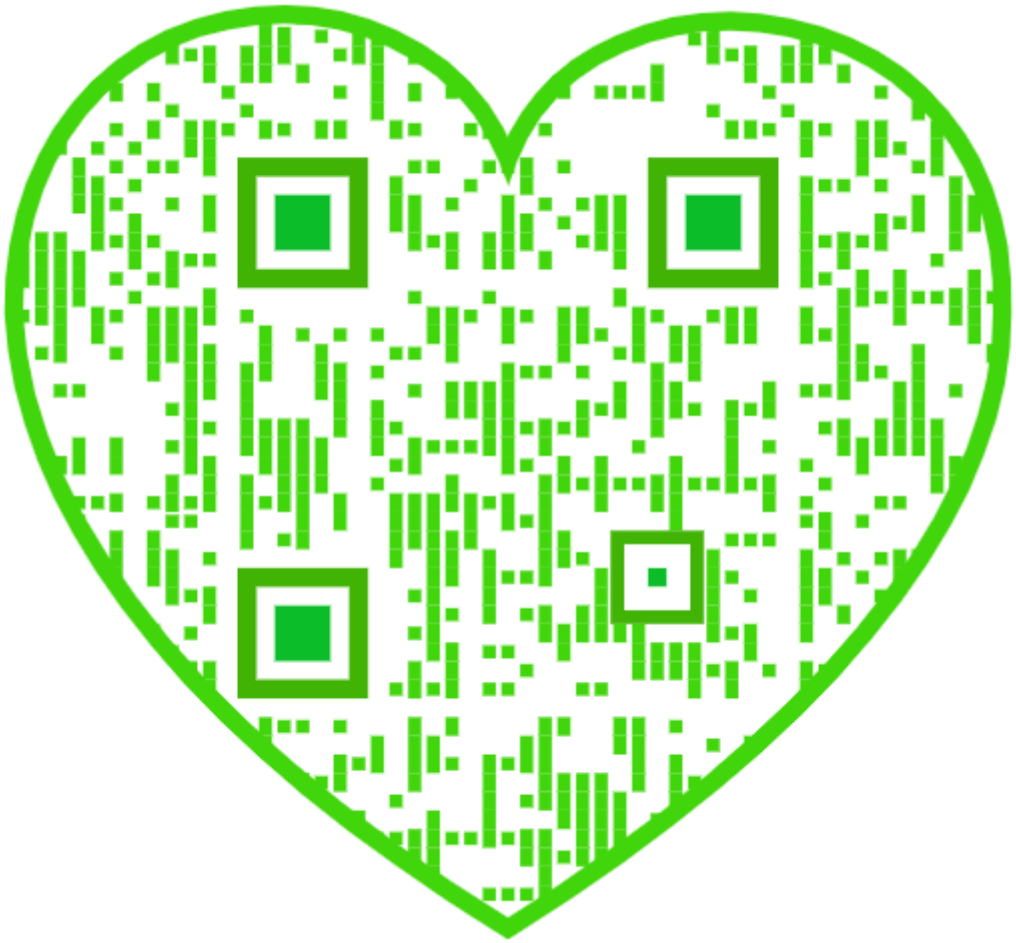

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A member of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion descends from the sky in a digital painting by award-winning illustrator Robert Carter.

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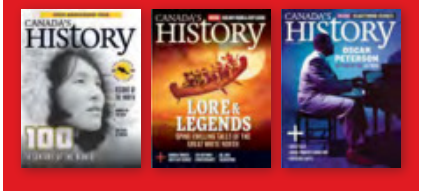

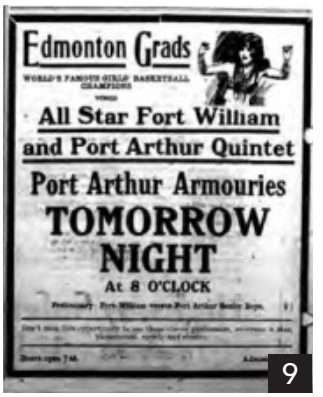

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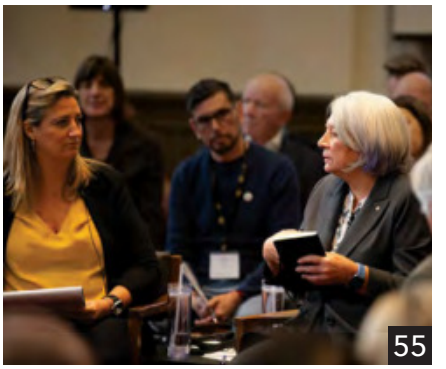
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COMING UP IN CANADA'S HISTORY

Fifty years of Celsius How we weathered the country's first big move to metric – swapping Fahrenheit for Celsius – in April 1975.

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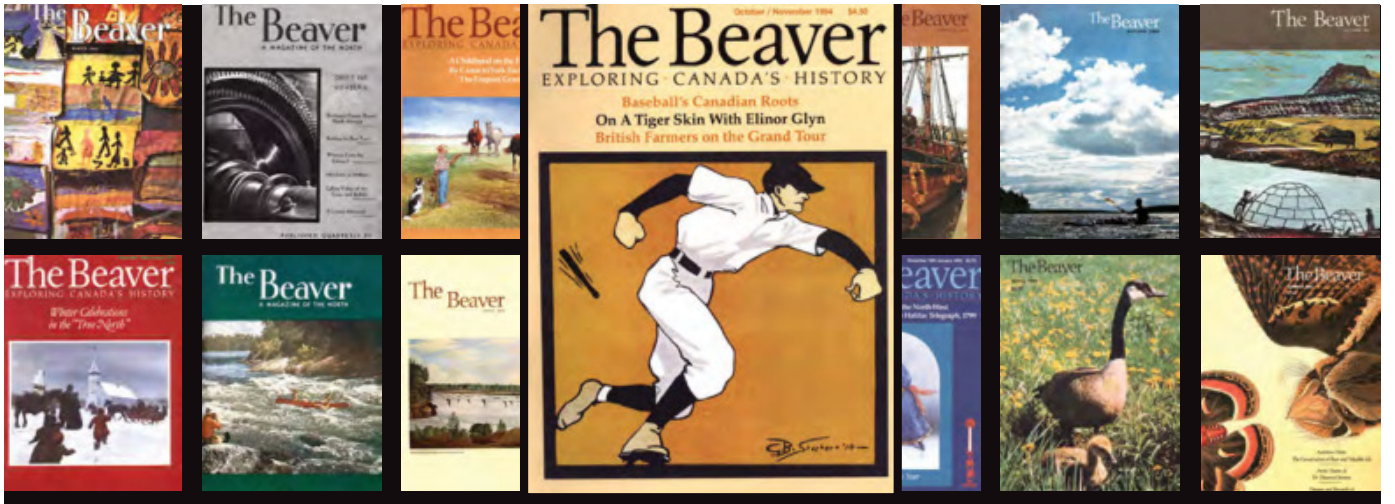
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Postwar homes, like this one on Tunis Avenue in Ottawa, are found across the country.

Home truths

When the federal government announced in late 2023 that it was revisiting a housing program it had used after the Second World War, I was intrigued. I've certainly seen umpteen examples of what my mother called "wartime houses," but didn't know the bigger story.

Back in the late 1940s, hundreds of thousands of Canadian soldiers — plus tens of thousands of war brides — returned home to find no available housing, for a variety of reasons, including lingering material shortages from the Depression that had been worsened by the war years. The solution the government arrived at — providing countless affordable "strawberry box" houses nationwide based on blueprints from a pattern book — strikes me as both humane and dignified.

Fast-forward to today and the critical housing shortage across the country: What lessons can we draw from the recent past? For a thoughtful take on the topic, turn to "Home Aid" (page 20) by Toronto-based writer John Lorinc.

On a related note, our cover story "Airborne Assault" reminds us that this year is the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Turn to page 38 for a remarkable account of the experiences of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion fighting the Nazis during the waning days of the war.

This issue also marks the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, the Irish revolutionary turned Canadian Father of Confederation (see "The Orator of Confederation," page 28). Writer David A. Wilson walks us through McGee's life, starting with his fiery passion for his home country through to his evolution as Canada's pre-eminent poetic voice pushing for a united country, and his tragic assassination.

Speaking of voices, I want to thank you, our readers, for sharing yours by taking part in the magazine survey we conducted last fall. Your input will help us continue to deliver a magazine you look forward to spending time with. In the same vein, I'm pleased to announce the winner of the official Canada's History Survey Draw: Calgary's A. Ivanoff. Congratulations!

Jackie Kovacs

CONTRIBUTORS

John Lorinc, who wrote "Home Aid," is a Toronto journalist and editor who specializes in urban affairs, local history, and climate. He contributes regularly to the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star*, and *Spacing* magazine, where he is senior editor. Lorinc is also the author of five books. His most recent, *No Jews Live Here: A Memoir*, was published by Coach House Books in 2024.

Jon Malek is the author of "Tailor Made." Malek is a historian specializing in migration, ethnicity, and the Filipino diaspora in Canada. He is an assistant professor at Providence University College in Otterburne, Manitoba, and has published on transnationalism, community formation, and Asian-Canadian immigration. His forthcoming book, *Pearl of the Prairies*, explores the history of the Manitoba Filipino community. He also writes for the *Pilipino Express* newspaper.

James Jackson wrote "Airborne Assault." Jackson is a graduate of the journalism program at Western University in London, Ontario, and has worked as an award-winning journalist in Waterloo Region since 2010. He studied history at the University of Guelph, and his grandfather was a proud member of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion from 1942 to 1945. He lives in Fergus, Ontario, with his wife and two daughters.

David A. Wilson is the author of "The Orator of Confederation." He is a professor in the Celtic Studies program and in the History department at the University of Toronto, and he is the general editor of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. His books include a two-volume biography of Thomas D'Arcy McGee and, more recently, *Canadian Spy Story: Irish Revolutionaries and the Secret Police*.

KATE JAIMET

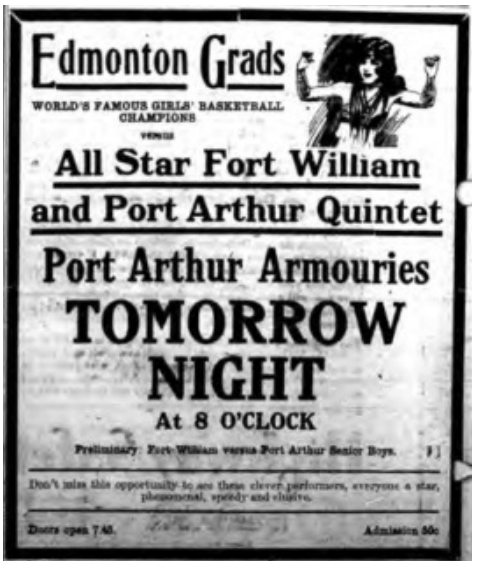
Basketball diaries

Each time I pick up the newest issue of *Canada's History* magazine, I always open it to the very last page first. I love the historical photo pictured and the story behind it. The photo in the December 2024-January 2025 issue showing Philip Winkelaar's mother in her Commercial High girls basketball uniform — and the story of the great women's team that came out of that school and was known as the Edmonton Grads — had particular significance for me.

My mother, Lillian McMillan, played against the Grads on June 23, 1928, in Port Arthur, Ontario, which joined with neighbouring Fort William to become Thunder Bay some forty-two years later. She was twenty-four at the time of the game and became a long-time elementary school-teacher in Fort William.

The Grads were on their way to play and win all their games in the Olympics when women's basketball was only a demonstration sport. Edmonton won 55-9 over Mom's team. Only three on Mom's team scored, and, although she wasn't one of them, I want to thank you for bringing back the memory of that game with yet another terrific last-page photo.

Len Corben
North Vancouver


Edmonton Grads
WORLD'S FAMOUS GIRLS' BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS
All Star Fort William
and Port Arthur Quintet
Port Arthur Armouries
TOMORROW
NIGHT
At 8 O'CLOCK
Preliminary: Fort William versus Port Arthur Senior Boys.
Don't miss this opportunity to see these clever performers, everyone a star, phenomenal, speedy and elusive.
Doors open 7.45.
Admission 50c

Reader Len Corben shared this newspaper clipping from the 1920s promoting one of his mother's basketball matches.

The gift of Oscar Peterson

Thank you for the feature story on Oscar Peterson (February-March 2025). He was treasured by Canadian university students in the fifties and sixties. His five Ts mentioned — "touch, time, tone, technique, and taste" — were expressed in his choice of instrument. He played only Böesendorfer pianos — their motto is *der Klang, der berührt* (the sound that touches). I gave a model 225 grand piano to the University of Alberta music department to help gifted students develop. At home, I enjoy playing Böesendorfer's Oscar Peterson model with Yamaha player accessory that allows the session he recorded at the factory in Vienna to be received via Internet.

Jack Ondrack
Parkland, Alberta

On board for cheese

To say that, as a founding board member of Canada's History Society, I was startled to find "Cheesy Money" (February-March 2025) in our beloved magazine is an understatement. I lived in LeRoy from 1939 to 1950 and remember the cheese factory well, especially the aroma.

I grew up in a co-operative family. My father, George Martin, was the Sask Pool agent and a founder of the credit union. My mother was the first president of the LeRoy Hospital Auxiliary.

Father died in 1950 and mother moved us to Winnipeg. I was back for a good visit in 1953 and a brief visit in 2018, but last year my older son made a special trip to take a photo of our house — the one we moved into in 1939.

LeRoy was an interesting place to grow up. Thank you so much for publishing the article.

Joe Martin
Toronto

A mountain of memories

I enjoyed your article on the Mollison sisters, CP hotels, and the CPR ("Rocky Mountain Highlanders," December 2024-January 2025). Jean and Annie were exceptional women, so thank you for sharing their stories.

I was especially drawn to this article because I spent two summers working in the curio shop at Chateau Lake Louise in the late 1960s. It was a dream job, as our days off were spent exploring the Banff, Jasper, and Lake Louise areas.

Your historic photos clearly illustrate the changing times as well as the changing landscape. The Mollisons' careers in hotel management follow these developments perfectly. I was pleased to read that they have received some recognition for their expertise in business and hospitality.

Barbara Davies
Montreal

Past imperfect

Many endlessly debate the effects of Canada's colonial history, both good and bad — although it seems that what happened during the British tenure comes off worse than what happened when the French were the colonial masters.

What appalls me is the jump to a cancel culture. We have seen it all, from name changes to restating what happened during the nineteenth century. I am no apologist for any bad behaviour, but instead of outright cancelling the history it needs to be explained — including in the context of the time. That is, indeed, how we learn.

David Collins
Victoria

Email comments to editors@CanadasHistory.ca or write to *Canada's History*, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9 Canada. Letters may be edited for length and style.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

A hopeful beginning

It was a cold, wet April morning in 1980 when Terry Fox dipped his artificial leg into the Atlantic Ocean near St. John's, Newfoundland, quietly launching his Marathon of Hope to raise money for cancer research. Little did the twenty-one-year-old know that forty-five years later Terry Fox runs would be taking place in twenty-five countries every year.

Born in Winnipeg and raised in Port Coquitlam, B.C., Fox lost much of his right leg to bone cancer in 1977 when he was eighteen. Witnessing the suffering of other cancer patients, including many children, inspired him to run to raise funds for research. Although he was forced to end his gruelling forty-two-kilometre-a-day marathon just outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, when cancer was found in his lungs, he had already raised about $2 million – and inspired millions more people.

Since Fox's death in June 1981, the Terry Fox Foundation has raised more than $850 million and funded more than 1,300 innovative cancer-research projects.

Toronto's Sunnyside Stadium, seen here during the summer of 1925, was a thriving location for women's softball long before it became the city's first lighted stadium. The grandstand would be rebuilt and the diamond reconfigured so that home runs landed in Lake Ontario.

Night vision

Toronto's female baseball players pioneered playing under the stars.

Electric lighting arrived in Toronto one evening in 1879 when two steam-powered arc lights were turned on at McConkey's restaurant on Yonge Street. According to historian Robert M. Stamp, McConkey's celebrated by serving free ice cream late into the night. By 1881, the Canadian National Exhibition was illuminated and open past sundown. Soon, circuses, lawn bowling matches, cycling races, fights, soccer and rugby games, and other events were all staged under temporarily constructed lighting rigs. Yet, for more than three decades after it became practical, no baseball or softball games were played under flares in Toronto.

Baseball purists scoffed at the idea. Sports editors at the *Globe* and the *Toronto Daily Star* urged their readers to reject the idea. Legendary player Lou Gehrig told radio listeners that night games "are not really baseball" and "were strictly advantageous to the owners' pocketbook." Into the darkness stepped a group of pioneering young women who started taking swings under the stars and sold tickets to their spectacle.

Standing within Sunnyside Amusement Park alongside Toronto's lakeshore, Sunnyside Stadium was built specifically for women's softball. Female competitors in three different leagues played in front of paying crowds filling its three thousand seats. Canadian track-and-field Olympic legend Bobbie Rosenfeld and others regularly smashed home runs into Lake Ontario or onto Lakeshore Boulevard. Catcher Isobel Savage, infielder Pat Turnbull, and outfielder Dot Annis became stars in the local sports pages. They were described as "pretty damsels of Sunnyside diamond fame."

During the summer of 1930, Sunnyside became the first and only stadium in Toronto with permanent lights. On August 18, at 9:05 p.m., the switch was flipped, and "a gasp of astonishment swept through the stands," wrote

TORONTO ARCHIVES

Top: Pitcher Billie Hallam, Miss Toronto 1937, was a beauty queen turned sporting attraction during the Great Depression. Above: Sunnyside Stadium seen in its final form in 1955.

one witness. "In a few seconds the bewilderment subsided as fans quickly realized the possibilities of perfect ball." Pitcher Marge Ellerby and catcher Dot Humpage took their positions. Then, leadoff hitter Hilda Thomas became the first person in Toronto to dig in at the plate with electric lights illuminating her batter's eye.

Crowds in excess of two thousand paying customers were common at night games for the next four ladies softball seasons. The professional men of the 1934 pennant-winning Maple Leafs Baseball Club averaged just 1,793 fans at their day games. It would take another three years before amateur – and, later still, professional – male ballplayers played under lights in Toronto.

But there was no turning back. Owing to improving technologies, business necessities, and those pretty damsels of Sunnyside diamond fame, nighttime ball games were here to stay. – *Stephen Dame*

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The seeds for Tancook Island cabbage were brought back from near extinction by a handful of Nova Scotia growers.

Seeds with a story

Heritage varieties offer both a sense of history and a promise of tomorrow.

For foodies, a good time on a Saturday often means heading to the farmers' market or a local farm stand. Increasingly, these shoppers opt for goods grown from heritage seeds (also known as heirloom seeds) and generally categorized as having been grown for fifty years or more, unlike mass-produced hybrid varieties.

Heritage varieties are often prized for their tasty flavours or their links to a region's history and culture. Tancook Island cabbage, for example, has been grown in Lunenberg County, Nova Scotia, since German settlers planted it in the 1700s. Once used to make sauerkraut that was sent around the world in sailing ships, it's been brought back from near extinction by a handful of local growers.

Canada's oldest wheat, Red Fife, came to Peterborough, Ontario, in the mid-1800s, purportedly via a hat used to scoop up some Ukrainian wheat in a Scottish harbour, and it's newly popular with artisanal bakers, in part because its gluten is said to be easier to digest.

For growers and makers, seed diversity and its role in coping with pests, diseases, and the weather extremes associated with climate change may be a consideration. "That's one of the best tools that farmers have available to them: a wide diversity of seeds to choose from, to work in a variety of different types of farming conditions," says Aabir Dey, director of the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, a program of the non-profit organization SeedChange. "We want to preserve them, because it might not perform as well as a modern hybrid variety in terms of yield. But there might be other characteristics that are worth exploring." – *Bonnie Schiedel*

Courting justice

The Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) is the highest in our judicial system, but it was not always as supreme as its name suggests. Since 1875 Canada's final court of appeal has grown in importance alongside the country's increasingly independent legal landscape. In celebration of the SCC's 150th anniversary, here are five ways the court has evolved – or stayed the same – over its lifetime:

Adjourned before it began

At its first sitting on January 17, 1876, the court had exactly zero cases on its docket. Case number one, *Kelly v. Sulivan* – which concerned the disputed purchase of Charlotte Antonia Sulivan's estate – would be heard six months later in June 1876.

Justice has many faces

Since its inception, the SCC has had ninety judges. Before 1982 they all were white men, but this changed with the appointment of Bertha Wilson that year. The SCC's first person of colour to be appointed judge, Mahmud Jamal, took his seat in 2021, while 2022 welcomed Michelle O'Bonsawin, the first Indigenous SCC judge.

Dressed to impress

Those judges' red robes trimmed with white mink are perfect for festive occasions – like the opening of a new session of Parliament. The garment's design is rooted in British legal tradition, although modern heating and ventilation have made the heavy item unpopular among new judges.

Commonwealth connections

The statues in front of the SCC building were originally meant for another purpose. The figures of Veritas (truth) and Justitia (justice) were created for a monument to King Edward VII that never came to be. They found a home at the court in 1970.

Superior at best

When it was established, the SCC could be overruled by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Britain, as seen in the famous Persons Case – when the SCC ruled that women were not legally "persons" in 1928, a decision the Privy Council reversed the following year. Appeals to the Privy Council were abolished in 1949, allowing the Supreme Court to finally live up to its name. *– Nicholas Hamilton*

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MADE IN CANADA

Jump start

If a certain springy device has helped you amuse your baby, you have Susan Olivia Davis Poole to thank. Born in April 1889, Poole grew up on the White Earth Reservation, an Anishinaabe reservation in Minnesota. There, she often observed mothers using traditional cradleboards as baby carriers – sometimes suspending them from sturdy tree branches so they became mini-swings. It was a memory that would serve her well.

She married Delbert Poole in 1909, and the couple settled first in Ontario and later in British Columbia. Poole had her first of seven children in 1910 and created a cradleboard of her own – but designed to let her baby's legs dangle freely and set low enough for those tiny feet to touch the floor. She called it a "jolly jumper" and used it for her children and then her grandchildren, modifying the design over the years with rubber and spring connections for better bouncing.

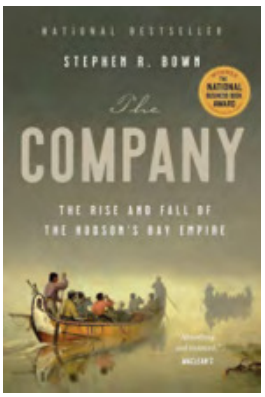
Poole's children convinced her that she should market her jolly jumper, and in 1957 she patented the "Baby Supporter and Exerciser," becoming the first Canadian Indigenous woman to patent an invention. Poole died in October 1975, but her device continues to keep babies bouncing.

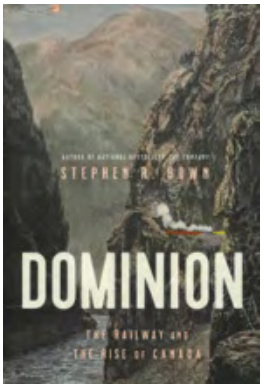
SIGNPOST

Oshawa

The Anishinaabemowin name for this city about sixty kilometres east of Toronto wasn't official until the mid-1800s. Prior to that, Oshawa was known as Skae's Corners, after Edward Skae, originally from Scotland, who ran a successful general store at the community's main intersection and became the local postmaster. When Skae requested official post office status in the early 1840s, he was told to get a better name for the area. At a public meeting, some Indigenous fur trappers suggested the name *azz haway*, which means "that point at the crossing of the stream where the canoe was exchanged for the trail." Recognizing that this name reflected the area's connection to water and land, as well as the importance of transportation in its founding, residents agreed, and "Oshawa" became the official name.

Q&A





The drama is in the details

Why complicated human stories make history more interesting and relevant

Author Stephen R. Bown strives to make the past accessible, meaningful, and even entertaining. His recent best-selling books, The Company: The Rise and Fall of the Hudson's Bay Empire*, and* Dominion: The Railway and the Rise of Canada*, offer fresh perspectives by highlighting lesser-known figures, events, and viewpoints. We spoke to Bown, who is a Governor General's History Award winner, about what can be learned by broadening the historical narrative.*

What should history teach us?

History should teach us that there is no one single component to the story of the past. There are many strands to the narrative, and to truly understand what was happening we have to do more than just list a string of important events and people. Instead, we have to try to explain and understand those events and all the different people involved in them, including those with minor roles.

Even if they contradict each other, disparate voices can teach us a lot on a question as fundamental as whether the transcontinental railway was a force for good. From our modern perspective, it is clear the Canadian Pacific Railway gave Canada a spine. But during its construction the CPR severely disrupted the way of life of many Indigenous peoples. Many rail workers, particularly the Chinese in British Columbia, faced horrific working conditions. These positive and negative facts are all part of the total story that history has to tell.

How do you try to make history interesting to the average person?

I try to focus on the people: How they lived, what they ate, how they worked, suffered, succeeded, and survived is of great interest to nearly everyone. Although people were genetically the same as us, the conditions were different. There were few roads, no telephones, limited policing and regulation. So, the world was more chaotic. Yet people lived their lives and still had much to celebrate and hope for.

How do you broaden the narrative, and what is the goal in doing so?

Broadening the narrative is about including different people and their points of view, even those who were in the minority or on the "wrong" side of a conflict. The story of the Hudson's Bay Company isn't just about financiers in London or nabobs of the trade in Montreal, it's about the Cree traders who brought in the furs, the Indigenous

COURTESY OF STEPHEN BOWN

Opposite page: Author Stephen R. Bown and his most recent books. Above top: Bown (left) and Jonathan Lainey (right), curator at the McCord Museum in Montreal, in a panel discussion on inclusive history. Above: Bown receiving his Governor General's History Award from Her Excellency Mary Simon.

guides who helped the company expand westward, the lonely and isolated Scottish post workers who married into Indigenous societies and raised their families, the daring explorers, and even the beavers.

Simplistic narratives of the great triumphs on the road to the present aren't interesting, and they aren't accurate. There is a view that the world of the past was the same as today except people were less enlightened or more racist and colonial. This is inaccurate. Most people were just struggling to live their lives, feed their families, and make the world a little easier for the next generation. This doesn't excuse immoral behaviour, but only looking at the bad is as much of a distortion as only looking at the good.

What do you hope readers gain from your writing?
I hope that my readers start to see that the world was as complex in the past as it is today – that there was never one exclusive, all-pervading attitude, and that there were always winners and losers in every situation. Reading and learning about the past is like travelling to a foreign country: It is best done with an open mind and willingness to learn about different peoples and cultures, rather than imposing our own values on a foreign country or a foreign time period.

TOP LEFT: ANDREW WORKMAN. LOWER LEFT: MS ANNE-MARIE BRISSON, RIDEAU HALL. © OSGG, 2024 © HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF CANADA REPRESENTED BY THE OSGG. REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL, 2024. BOTTOM RIGHT: MUSEUM OF HEALTH CARE AT KINGSTON. USED WITH PERMISSION

On guard for teeth

The term "hockey teeth" seems like an oxymoron – the gappy grins of so many players say a mouthful about how rough our favourite game can get. Since April is Oral Health Month, we're looking at the legacy of the "Father of the Mouthguard," Arthur Wood, a dentist and hockey coach from Mississauga, Ontario, who was treating so many game-related broken teeth that he decided to do something about it.

Mouthguards had been standard equipment in boxing since the 1920s, but there was no such device for hockey. So in 1952, Wood joined forces with his engineer neighbour Charles Patterson and created the "mug guard" – an oval-shaped wire cage that went over a player's mouth and was strapped to the helmet.

The design evolved for more comfort, and within a few years the reduction in broken teeth was so remarkable that in 1961 the Mississauga Hockey League made mug guards mandatory for all players. The device's popularity spread across Canada and into the United States.

Wood continued his work improving the safety of hockey equipment by helping to invent proper helmets in the 1970s. Although the resulting full-facemask design meant the extinction of the mug guard, the Museum of Health Care at Kingston in Ontario has preserved some of the original devices. In the 1980s Wood and other dentists started creating custom-fitted guards to be worn inside the mouth – devices that are used to this day.

Wood never patented his original mug guard, but his lifetime of community work earned him membership in the Order of Canada. Now that's a reason to smile.

This 1952 mug guard from the Museum of Health Care at Kingston, Ontario, shows the early design: a wire cage attached to white leather, glued to foam padding. This would be placed over a player's mouth and strapped to the helmet.

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As sharp as ever

Tales and Treasures from the rich legacy of the Hudson's Bay Company

An ulu is a remarkable multi-purpose tool that's sometimes referred to as a woman's knife. Uluit — as they are known in the plural form — are an important part of Indigenous Arctic material culture, with varieties from Russian Aleut to Alaskan Yupik, Canadian Inuit, and Kalaallit (Greenlandic Inuit) peoples.

Uluit can be used to scrape and to process skins, to chop meat, and to make clothing. There are different sizes and styles for these varying tasks, but all have a semicircular blade plus a handle made from bone, ivory, or wood.

This ulu's cutting edge was made from slate, a type of stone that was ground to a sharp edge and drilled to affix a handle. Metal ulu blades did not appear only after the arrival of Europeans; numerous examples have been found that were made from local copper deposits or from meteoric iron from Greenland.

Today uluit are still an important part of traditional activities. But they also make great pizza cutters or general-purpose kitchen knives. — *Amelia Fay, curator of the HBC Collection at the Manitoba Museum*

HUDSON'S BAY

The Beaver magazine was originally founded as a Hudson's Bay Company publication in 1920. To read stories from past issues, go to **CanadasHistoryArchive.ca**. To explore the history of the Hudson's Bay Company, go to **hbcheritage.ca**, or follow HBC's Twitter and Instagram feeds at **@HBCHeritage.**

CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES

HOME AID

How the federal government confronted the postwar housing crisis.

by John Lorinc

In January 1946, a group of Second World War veterans staged a headline-grabbing protest that was unprecedented in the history of a gritty west coast metropolis.

Thirty members of the New Veterans Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion occupied the old Hotel Vancouver, a hulking six-hundred-room structure built by the Canadian Pacific Railway in an Italianate style. Located at West Georgia and Howe streets in Vancouver's business district, the hotel had been known for years as "the palace of the people" and featured destination bars, restaurants, and shops, while boasting such famous guests as Charlie Chaplin, Winston Churchill, and Babe Ruth. But the CPR had constructed a larger, more modern replacement not far away and wanted to divest itself of this older and now vacant property.

For more than a year before the occupation, Vancouver's housing crunch had become steadily worse. The empty hotel served as a stark reminder of

Wartime houses in Rushmore Heights, Prince Rupert, B.C., around 1942.

Known as "the palace of the people," the old Hotel Vancouver, seen here around 1939, was the site of a headline-grabbing event in January 1946 when Second World War veterans gathered there to protest a lack of available housing.

CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES

the plight of veterans who were then facing eviction from temporary purpose-built wartime housing. What's more, the housing shortage had stirred up tense feuding among provincial political parties, the city, and the federal government. A federal estimate put the city's housing shortfall, as of mid-1945, at twenty-five thousand units. Housing activists were calling on the government to build five thousand new dwellings and to acquire the hotel so it could be transformed into a hostel for homeless veterans. Picketers carrying signs with angry slogans — one read "Empty Hotel plus Homeless Veterans equals Civic Disgrace" — protested in front of the hotel, and finally the band of legionnaires took matters into their own hands.

"Led by sergeant-at-arms Bob McEwen, a 'shock troop' walked into the hotel lobby and informed two lone army guards that they were taking possession of the building," wrote B.C. historian Catherine Jill Wade in her 1986 account of the incident. "They wired the news to Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King. The 'occupying force' drew up strict house rules to govern behaviour and organized committees to handle food, billeting, recreation, and hygiene. They hung a I5' x 3' [five-metre by one-metre] banner on the hotel's Granville Street wall that read 'Action at Last / Veterans! Rooms for You. Come and Get Them.' By Saturday evening, 100 ex-service men and women and their dependents had registered at the hotel." Hundreds more arrived within the next few days.

The Hotel Vancouver incident played out at a moment when the federal government's piecemeal approach to meeting the housing needs of almost a million returning veterans — as well as tens of thousands of war brides from such countries as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands — had become a litmus test of Canada's ability to navigate a social crisis.

Through the Depression and then the Second World War, Canada's home-building industry had been virtually gutted, first by economic conditions and then by labour and material shortages. New construction dropped from 50,200 units in 1928 to 14,000 in 1932, while urban home ownership declined from forty-eight per cent to forty-one per cent from 1921 to 1941, according to a 2024 paper in the *Journal of Planning Perspectives*.

Beginning in 1941, Ottawa became active in constructing what it considered to be temporary rental housing for the families of people working in wartime industries. The veterans' return — 620,000 in 1945 and 1946 alone

— turbocharged the housing crunch. Indeed, federal officials anticipated this problem as early as 1944, when housing and planning experts began studying the conditions that awaited those who would come home from overseas.

In many larger cities, these experts noted, lower-income families lived in so-called slums, warrens of overcrowded working-class row houses that they said should be condemned and demolished. Tens of thousands of families were forced to double up, while the number of those who rented their dwellings had risen steadily — a worrisome trend in a country that attached enormous social and economic importance to home ownership.

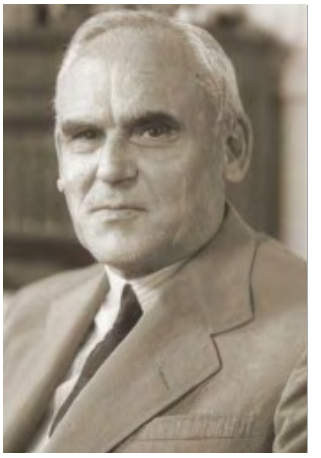
The task of confronting this housing crisis wasn't merely a matter of a construction catch-up. Ottawa's decision making in that period was also informed by fraught ideological debates about the state's role in housing, financing, architecture, and community planning. In fact, the choices made first by the King government and then by Louis St. Laurent's after 1948 defined the very form and evolution of Canada's postwar urban and suburban development while amplifying the disenfranchisement of returning Indigenous veterans. It was a "very consequential" period, says J. David Hulchanski, a University of Toronto professor of housing and community development. "Decisions were made at that time which are still with us today, which is to maximize the amount of market housing. Today, ninety-six per cent of Canadians have to go to the market for their housing, either to rent or to buy."

The story of how Canada navigated the postwar housing crisis obviously has resonance today, with all sorts of overlapping elements — the proliferation of overcrowded rental housing and construction-labour shortages, for example — and perhaps even some common solutions.

Joseph Pigott was something of a rarity in Canadian business circles during the war: a wealthy builder who had not only survived the Depression but was running one of the country's most successful construction firms, in Hamilton. In 1941, the King government tapped him to run a new Crown corporation called Wartime Housing Ltd. (WHL), which had a mandate to build rental housing for the people working in wartime industries as well as for veterans. Pigott was "very forceful, very hard-driving," comments Queen's University planning historian David Gordon. "Just what C.D. Howe [King's so-called 'minister of everything'] needed."

The following year, Ottawa passed the *Veterans' Land Act* (VLA), which also targeted the housing shortage, but from a rural perspective. After the First World War, the federal government had tried to set up returning soldiers on large fallow lots and to teach them to farm — an experiment in social engineering that failed for many people who couldn't get the hang of agriculture. The new act provided financing assistance, in the form of a partly forgivable loan, for two-acre (0.8-hectare) parcels, including lands on the urban fringe upon which veterans could

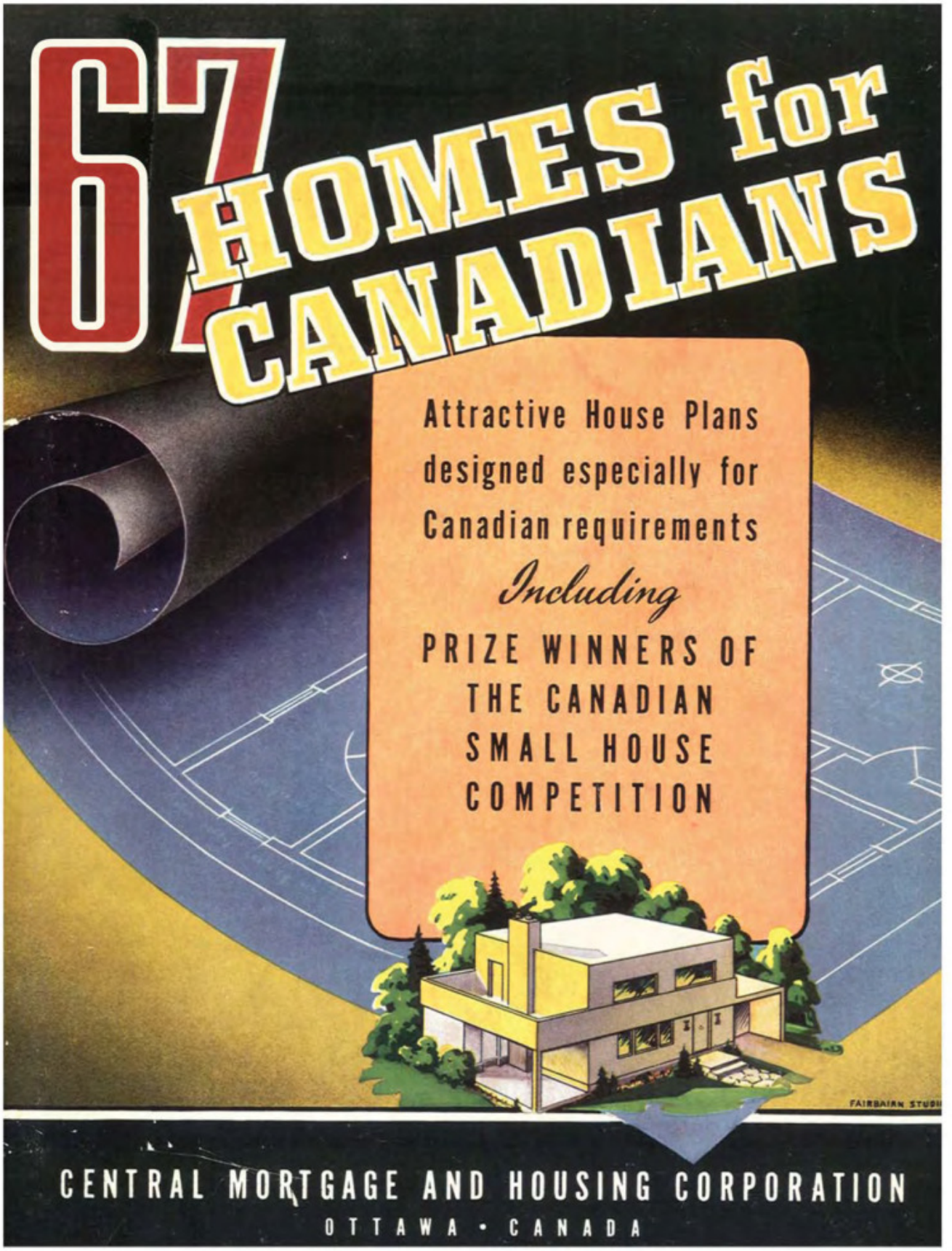
TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES WERE FORCED TO DOUBLE UP, WHILE THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO RENTED THEIR DWELLINGS HAD RISEN STEADILY.



Above left: Hamilton construction executive Joseph Pigott headed up Wartime Housing Ltd. Finance officials worried that his desire to address low-income housing needs was too socialist-leaning.

Above right: C.D. Howe, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's so-called minister of everything, ran the government's war production program as head of the Department of Munitions and Supply.

LOWER LEFT: RIGHTTOHOUSING.CA. LOWER RIGHT: CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM



Above: The 1947 pattern book from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
Opposite page: One of the sixty-seven different house plans available in the pattern book.

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION (CMHC)

build homes (sometimes by themselves) and grow a modest amount of food to supplement other income.

The VLA led to the construction of thousands of homes in semi-rural places like Ancaster, Ontario, outside of Hamilton. By the late 1940s, according to a history of the program written by McMaster University geographers Tricia Shulist and Richard Harris, two-thirds of homes were being built by the owners themselves, with technical assistance from VLA officials who had an explicit mandate to teach these veterans construction techniques and to provide expert assistance.

The program's administrators extended no such support to returning First Nations veterans. According to briefs submitted to the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Indian Affairs Branch inserted itself into this policy file, asserting that VLA benefits not be made available to returning Indigenous veterans, who were meant to remain on reserves. Ottawa later tweaked the act to allow for smaller loans for on-reserve Indigenous veterans, but with the funds "paid to the Minister of Mines and Resources who shall have the control and management thereof on behalf of the Indian veteran."

In some cases, these veterans could receive a grant only if they agreed to move to certain reserves. "What happened in a lot of cases, especially out west and the Prairies in Alberta, [is that] a lot of reserve land was expropriated and given to returning vets," says (retired) Sergeant Wendy Jocko, former Chief of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation. Her own father, who served in Scotland, and five of his brothers simply weren't told. "They were not aware of certain programs or entitlements," Jocko says. "And that's a real shame."

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As for WHL, between 1941 and 1947 Pigott oversaw an impressively efficient operation that assembled land, constructed over thirty thousand temporary homes, and also built fire stations, schools, and community centres. The WHL houses tended to be modest — bungalows with no basements, built according to template designs — and situated near factories making commodities such as munitions. Pigott and his board of volunteer advisors turned WHL into a highly decentralized organization — there were fifty-one field offices overseeing projects in seventy-three municipalities across Canada — that also managed this far-flung portfolio of rental stock.

Indeed, as Jill Wade documented, Pigott had a vision for the future role of WHL, which he shared with Ottawa: "If the Federal Government has to go on building houses for soldiers' families; if they have to enter the field of low cost housing which it is my opinion they will undoubtedly have to do, then there is a great deal to be said in favour of using the well-established and smoothly operating facilities of Wartime Housing to continue to plan and construct these projects and afterwards to manage and maintain them."

Officials in the Liberal government, however, had other ideas.

In 1944, an advisory committee to the federal government released a hefty report on housing and community planning as a piece of the postwar reconstruction process — a study that came to be known colloquially as the Curtis Report, after the committee chair, Clifford Curtis, a professor of economics at Queen's University. As they thought about the future of housing and planning, Curtis and others involved were highly influenced by emerging town planning-ideas from the United Kingdom and the United States — approaches that focused on the neighbourhood as the ideal unit of development and included features such as curvilinear streets or cul-de-sacs.

Curtis's report also focused intently on scale and on the mechanics of financing. He said Canada needed 606,000 new urban units and 125,000 new farmhouse units in the first decade after the war. The report went on to recommend that this massive goal be achieved through the creation of a new entity — the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) — that would assemble land, write mortgages, and even counsel would-be developers on the proper techniques for creating modern subdivisions. Curtis's committee recommended that the federal government authorize thirty-year, five-per-cent mortgages and provide a backstop, in the form of mortgage insurance, that would remove any lending risk for banks.

While the government equipped this new Crown corporation with the tools it needed to defray virtually all the financial risk for nascent builders, Hulchanski says the ideological thrust of the CMHC policy was to leverage the private market to produce new housing, both for returning veterans and for a growing population. The agency would absorb WHL, with its large portfolio of rented homes, and then sell them off, either to the existing tenants or to investors. Despite Pigott's advocacy, the Liberal government had

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION (CMHC)

Many of the communities that Humphrey Carver's team designed in the late 1940s – like this one in Ajax, Ontario – still exist in cities across Canada.

no intention of remaining in the public-housing business, which carried the unwelcome taint of socialism in a period marked by anti-communist politics. Unsurprisingly, Ottawa hired an insurance-industry veteran, David Mansur, to serve as the CMHC's first president.

The wrinkle in this narrative involves one of Mansur's early hires, a British-born planning reformer and academic named Humphrey Carver, who joined the CMHC in 1948 as a research advisor. A proponent of the garden cities approach pioneered by British planner Ebenezer Howard as well as more modernist community design, Carver regarded his muscular agency as a way of promoting state-of-the-art planning ideas tailored to the car- and nuclear-family-oriented postwar recovery. Many of the communities that Carver's team designed still exist in cities across Canada, from Renfrew Heights in Vancouver to Colonial Park in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, and Topham Park in Toronto's East York district.

By today's standards, the CMHC of that period was extraordinarily prescriptive, dictating planning regulations to provincial and municipal governments, acquiring large tracts of land, and assembling contractors to do the work. Samuel Gitterman, a Montreal designer, signed on to oversee an ambitious architectural program to complement the planning, filling numerous "pattern books" with templates for various types of homes, from very basic bungalows known as "strawberry boxes" to somewhat more elaborate bungalows and backsplits. Homebuyers who wanted to qualify for CMHC financing could select their home's floor plan from one of the CMHC's pattern books and then buy the blueprint for it for ten dollars. Carver, says Queen's University's Gordon, distributed almost a million copies of those catalogues through the CMHC's extensive network of field offices. Their ubiquity explains why certain types of virtually identical postwar houses can be seen in communities across Canada.

MONTREAL DESIGNER SAMUEL GITTERMAN FILLED THE NUMEROUS PATTERN BOOKS WITH TEMPLATES FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF HOMES.

Gordon adds that one of the reasons Canada's postwar

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suburbs are somewhat denser than their American counterparts is because Carver advocated for community-planning models that tended to be more space-efficient than the subdivisions that sprang up across the U.S. He knows this trait from first-hand experience, as from 1960 to 1966 his family lived in Oromocto, a CMHC project next to CFB Gagetown in New Brunswick, not far from Fredericton. It was completed in 1958.

"My father served in Korea, and I was an army brat for a while," he says of his family's decision to locate at Oromocto. The Gordons lived in a semi-detached house, known in the CMHC's catalogues as a "JJ/54/T." The neighbourhood had abundant green space and trails, with two anchors — a brand new shopping mall and a public-school complex — anticipating the kind of planning that informed Don Mills, an entirely privately funded Toronto subdivision often considered to be the first true example of postwar suburban planning in Canada. "I could walk to my elementary school without crossing a major street," he recalls. "It was a great place to be a kid."

Jocko's family, on the other hand, enjoyed no such perks. After the war, her parents moved from Madawaska to Pembroke, Ontario, working in the local lumber industry. They could never afford a home, and Jocko and her sister, Leona, along with their brothers Mark, Paul, and Sandy, were removed from their parents' care for several years during the Sixties Scoop. Jocko is not aware of any kind of compensation for the thousands of Indigenous veterans who fought for Canada but were denied the housing programs provided to so many others. "I think an apology came," she says. "But all the veterans were dead [by then], so it was too late even to hear an apology, if there was one."

In some ways, Ottawa's response to the current housing crisis is more modest because past intrusions into provincial and municipal jurisdiction wouldn't fly today. However, there are certainly echoes, from the rhetorical urgency expressed by federal politicians of all stripes in the aftermath of an inflationary crisis to fine-grain details, such as Ottawa's decision to reintroduce pattern books — featuring updated designs — as a way of speeding up approvals. There's one other important parallel: pent-up demand from a massive demographic bulge — the millennial generation, which, like the parents of the baby boomers of the postwar era, desperately needs better housing. However, in a climate crisis we certainly can't afford to solve a twenty-first-century housing crisis with low-density suburbs, no matter how progressively they might be planned.

Hulchanski and earlier historians like Jill Wade suggestively point out a crucial policy common denominator, which is that after the war, like today, governments looked to the private market for solutions to severe housing crises. Yes, there have been periods when governments saw fit to build social housing — the WHL's run during the war years, for example, and then the surge of funding for subsidized social and co-op housing in the 1960s and 1970s.

But Ottawa has cleaved to a market-driven policy for decades, with scant evidence of a change in direction, despite the hardships that many Canadians, especially younger people, now experience — as did their grandparents after the Second World War. "Here we are," says Hulchanski. "Does that mean there might be some change? Because everything, in my view, is quite messed-up. Average people and middle-income people are being harmed."

As in the mid-1940s, many Canadians, especially younger people and newcomers, are desperate for solutions to this housing crisis, and want to see Ottawa adopt a wartime campaign adapted for the twenty-first century.

HOUSING NUMBERS CRUNCH

As of mid-1945, Canada had a population of eleven million, about a million of whom had served during the Second World War and would soon be decommissioned. As these numbers show, after almost a decade and a half of economic stagnation and wartime rationing, the housing shortage had reached crisis proportions.

45,000
The shortfall of housing units across Canada between 1941 and 1945

620,000
Number of Canadians discharged between June 1945 and June 1946

31,192
Rental dwellings completed by Wartime Housing Ltd. between 1941 and 1947

29,452
Number of WHL homes sold off by the CMHC as of 1952, for a windfall of $110.5 million

66%
Proportion of houses financed by the *Veterans' Land Act* that were owner-built in 1949

48,657
Number of houses completed between 1945 and 1949 using *National Housing Act* financing and lending programs administered by the CMHC

An 1867 oil painting of Thomas D'Arcy McGee.

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THE ORATOR *of* CONFEDERATION

Thomas D'Arcy McGee's golden words helped to conjure Canada into existence – but his Irish revolutionary past came back to haunt him.

by David A. Wilson

He is remembered best for the worst of reasons. On an April night in 1868, Thomas D'Arcy McGee — journalist, historian, poet, orator, one-time Irish revolutionary turned Canadian Father of Confederation — was assassinated on Sparks Street in downtown Ottawa. Shock waves of grief, anger, and fear pulsed through the country. Six days later, on what would have been his forty-third birthday, some eighty thousand people thronged the streets of Montreal in the largest funeral Canada had ever seen. The tributes were long and lasting: He was a "martyr to the cause of his country," according to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. Historian D.C. Harvey later called him "the prophet of Canadian nationality," while a correspondent wrote to Senator Charles Murphy that McGee was "one of those legendary beings, capable of doing everything and doing everything well." Canadians were, it seemed, united in admiration and in sorrow.

Not all of them, though. In the backrooms of pubs, in the privacy of their homes, and in safe social circles were those who celebrated, danced, and sang when they read the news. "Here's long life and prosperity to the man that shot D'Arcy McGee," toasted a man named Michael Kelly in a Brampton, Ontario, tavern. In Ottawa, a man named Mulvihill "did a step, waving the paper over his head, saying 'Hell's flames to your soul, Thomas D'arcy McGee,'" one of the man's descendants, Nora Daly, later wrote in her memoirs. And in Prescott, Ontario, MLA Mcneil Clarke overheard someone declare that "the shooting of McGee was hard but honest." The message was clear: For those Irish Canadians who identified with the revolutionary Fenian Brotherhood — which sought to overthrow British rule by violent means — McGee was a traitor to Ireland who had got exactly what he deserved.

Born two hundred years ago, on April 13, 1825, McGee is the only federal Member of Parliament in Canadian history to fall victim to a political assassination. Why did McGee generate such extreme reactions? How did an Irish revolutionary wind up as a Father of Confederation? Who shot him, and for what reason? What was his legacy? The search for answers takes us on a journey across three countries, through revolution, famine, nativism, religious conflict, and political polarization, into the story of one man's attempt to make sense of the changing world in which he lived and, ultimately, to make it better.

A colourized photograph shows delegates from the legislatures of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island at the Charlottetown Convention on Confederation on September 1, 1864. Thomas D'Arcy McGee stands eleventh from left, directly in front of the pillar to the left of the central doorway.

McGee was born in the town of Carlingford, on the east coast of Ireland. When he was eight, the family moved to Wexford, a stronghold of Irish nationalism that had been at the centre of a bloody and failed rising against English rule in 1798. His father, an Irish nationalist, worked in the customs and excise service; his mother, who died when he was eight years old, inspired him with her love of Irish poetry, legends, and songs.

After spending three years in the United States — where, at the age of nineteen, he became editor of the *Boston Pilot*, the country's largest Irish-American newspaper — McGee returned to Ireland in 1845 and joined the nationalist Young Ireland movement, which sought not only to win political freedom but also to promote the language, literature, art, and music of the country.

Finding himself among kindred spirits, McGee articulated his vision for Ireland's future in a series of newspaper articles and speeches that marked him out as one of the greatest writers and orators of his time. Ireland, he insisted, must have an independent parliament while retaining "the golden link" of the Crown; in this way, Irish interests could be combined with British security requirements, to the benefit of both countries. He advocated a pluralistic form of nationalism, which would encompass and embrace people from all regions, religions, and classes; Ireland was to become a nineteenth-century version of a multicultural society. At the same time, it was essential to protect Irish culture, literature, and music, breaking with English cultural dominance and developing a sense of pride and dignity.

Many years later, his Irish cultural nationalism would assume a Canadian form. "Come!" he would exclaim in 1857 in the *New Era*, a newspaper he published in Montreal. "Let us construct a national literature for Canada, neither British nor French, nor Yankeeish, but the offspring and heir of the soil, borrowing lessons from all lands, but asserting its title throughout all!"

But in 1845 his future in Canada could not have been predicted, and no one would have been more surprised at the turn his life would take than McGee himself. At the time, his energies and emotions were entirely focused on Ireland.

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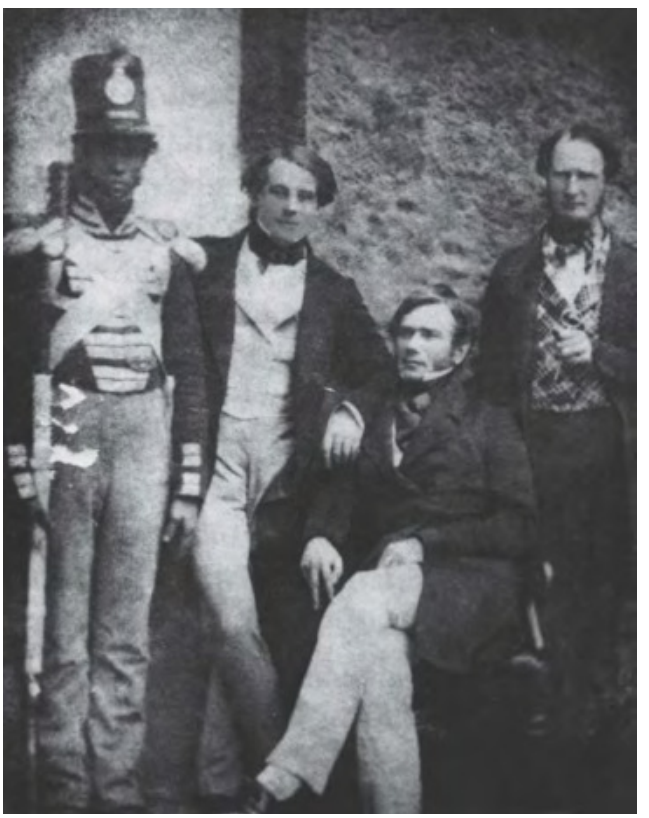
McGee's passion for building Ireland's future was heightened by his visits to historic sites and long walks through the countryside. On a three-day pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory, on an island in Loch Derg, he was deeply moved by the scenic beauty of County Donegal and by the "wild, melodious" hymn sung by "a group of dark-haired, fine-featured young girls." Within the next five years, most of those young girls would probably be dead.

Beginning in 1846, and lasting until 1851, famine swept across Ireland and wrought terrible consequences for the country. A potato blight destroyed the sole source of food for one-third of Ireland's population, mainly poor, Catholic tenant farmers, cottiers, and labourers. The response of the government in London was inadequate and inconsistent. "My heart is sick at daily scenes of misery," McGee said in one of his Young Ireland speeches in 1848. "I have seen human beings driven like foxes to earth themselves in holes and fastnesses; I have heard the voice of mendicancy [beggary] hourly ringing in my ears, until my heart has turned to stone, and my brain to flint, from inability to help them." Disease, starvation, and mass evictions tore the country apart. By the time it was over, one million people had died; another million emigrated — more than one hundred thousand of them to Canada. "I do, in my soul, believe," McGee wrote in 1847, "that we are now, at this very hour, in the process of being exterminated as a people."

Some of the more radical Young Irelanders were gravitating towards revolution as a solution for Ireland's increasingly dire problems. McGee, along with the majority, remained on the moderate wing of the movement. All this changed, though, when revolution broke out on the streets of Paris in February 1848 and rapidly spread throughout Europe. Suddenly, everything seemed so easy: After a show of strength from the people, their rulers were either fleeing or making concessions. "All over the world," declared Charles Gavan Duffy, one of the founders of the Young Ireland movement, "from the frozen swamps of Canada, to the rich corn fields of Sicily — in Italy, Denmark, in Prussia, and in glorious France, men are up for their rights." Surely Ireland, the country that had "suffered more than any other in Europe," would not allow itself to be left behind.

As the Young Irelanders moved towards revolution, McGee moved with them. In July 1848 he was elected to the revolutionary council that drew up plans for the rising. While his fellow revolutionaries went to the south and west of Ireland to rally their supporters in the countryside, McGee's mission was to organize Irish revolutionaries in Scotland and bring them over to Ireland: The idea was to seize two or three merchant steamers, put pistols to the heads of their captains, and force them to take a revolutionary army into the northwest of Ireland. There, they would gather support among their countrymen and conduct a guerrilla campaign against the British army, drawing its soldiers away from the main action to the south. "It would be like hitting the enemy in the back of the head," McGee wrote.

"I DO, IN MY SOUL, BELIEVE THAT WE ARE NOW, AT THIS VERY HOUR, IN THE PROCESS OF BEING EXTERMINATED AS A PEOPLE."



Young Irelanders Thomas Francis Meagher, centre left, and William Smith O'Brien, centre right, are flanked by a soldier and a jailer at an unidentified jailhouse in 1848. Condemned to death for high treason, their sentences were commuted to transportation to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

PHOTO MUSEUM IRELAND

Almost immediately, everything fell apart. In Glasgow McGee learned that he had been recognized and was about to be arrested. His friends there assured him that they would organize the expedition to Ireland, and they advised him to return home to prepare the ground for their landing in County Sligo, on Ireland's northwest coast. By the time he arrived, however, news came through that the Young Irelanders in the south had been defeated. Upon hearing this, the revolutionaries in Scotland abandoned their plans, and McGee was left alone, with no reinforcements coming. In desperation, he turned to local leaders of agrarian secret societies and tried to persuade them to open up guerrilla operations. After two days of intense debate, they refused on the grounds that there was no chance of success.

With a price on his head and the authorities on his tail, McGee had run out of options. In September he was rowed by a republican sympathizer from the Irish coast to a ship bound for Philadelphia.

"EITHER CANADA NEEDS A REVOLUTION, OR IT NEEDS NOTHING."

The 1866 lithograph "Freedom to Ireland," by New York publisher Currier & Ives, shows a woman warrior allegorically representing Ireland, with a poem urging insurrection against the "Saxon foe."

Shortly after landing, he wrote a public letter in which he defended Young Ireland's decision to launch a rising and signed off as "THOMAS D'ARCY McGEE. A Traitor to the British Government." The British Empire, he now believed, "must be dragged to pieces," and the best place to start, after Ireland, was Canada. He spent the next eight months spitting fire against all things British, attempting to rekindle the revolutionary flame in Ireland and urging Irish Canadians to avenge the Famine by taking up arms against their rulers. "Either Canada needs a revolution," he asserted, "or it needs nothing."

As an exile in the United States, McGee argued that the Young Irelanders should learn from the failure of their rising, build up a secret revolutionary organization, and get it right the next time. But in Ireland, some of his former revolutionary colleagues were drawing very different lessons from the defeat.

One of them, Charles Gavan Duffy, informed McGee in the spring of 1849 that the combined effects of the Famine and military defeat had transformed the situation in Ireland. Revolution, Duffy wrote, was now impossible, and all the wishful thinking in the world could not change that hard reality. If that was the case, the worst thing McGee could do was to lead the people on a path that went nowhere. Instead, he should work for piecemeal, practical reforms that would improve the condition of his countrymen.

Gradually, painfully, McGee absorbed Duffy's lesson. Establishing his own newspaper, the *American Celt*, in 1850, and living in New York, Boston, and Buffalo, he repeatedly transmitted the message to his fellow emigrants: Given the power imbalance between Britain and Ireland, revolution was doomed to failure. The way forward was through moral force, not physical force, through gradual reform rather than wholesale revolution. Once McGee had taken that position, there was no going back: Through his writings and his speeches, he set out to defeat the revolutionaries in his midst.

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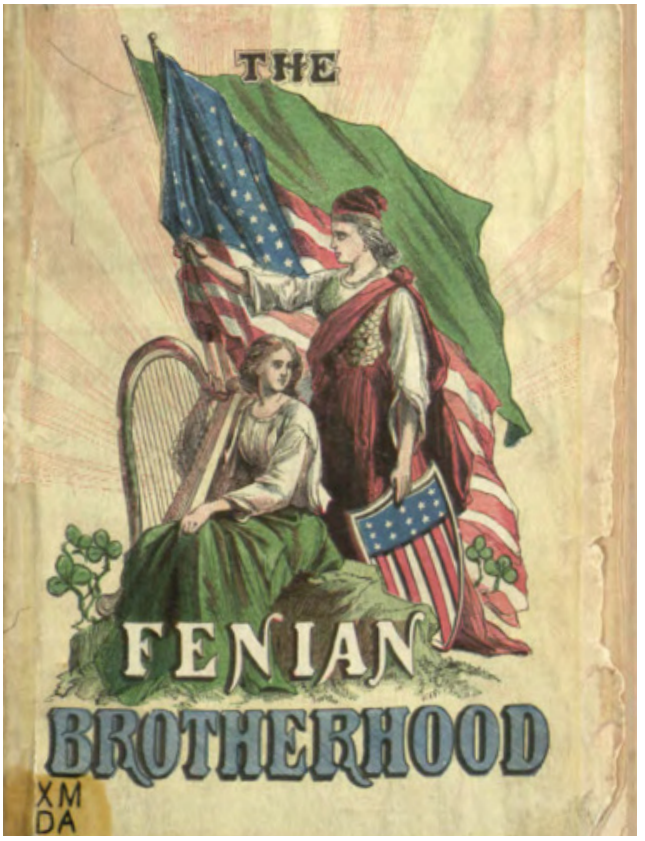

Left: The cover of the 1865 book *The Fenians' Progress: A Vision* by John Bradburn.
Right: Militiamen who volunteered to defend Canada West against Fenian invasion included Frank Iveson (front centre), Peter Crerar (front left), and three unidentified men.

At the same time, McGee was becoming increasingly alienated from what he saw as the American way of life: It was too materialistic, too individualistic, too violent. Meanwhile, his fellow Irish emigrants and exiles, trapped in urban ghettos, were not only experiencing exploitation, degradation, and anti-Catholic prejudice, they were also becoming corrupted beyond recognition.

All of this was happening against the background of an intensifying nativist backlash against immigrants. Attacks on Irish-Catholic neighbourhoods, church burnings, assaults on priests, full-scale riots — all were becoming part of the new reality of the United States. It got worse as the decade wore on, with the growth of the anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant Know-Nothing party, which would win elections in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Indiana, and which looked set to win the presidency. For Irish Catholics, these were terrifying times.

Convinced that American Protestants were fighting an undeclared war against Irish Catholics, and coming to believe that the Protestant emphasis on individual conscience was producing democracy without morality, McGee sought shelter in the Catholic faith. In 1851, after a profound religious experience, he jettisoned his earlier liberalism and resurfaced as an ultra-conservative Catholic. He inhabited a world of absolute moral certainty, in which the Catholic Church stood alone against democratic demagogues, apostate Catholics, persecuting Protestants, radical liberals, and red republicans, all of whom were part of the "Revolution of Antichrist." It was, to say the least, a truly remarkable transformation.

This meant that many of his former colleagues now viewed him as a traitor. Michael Doheny, who would become a founder of Fenianism, beat him up on the street. But it also meant that McGee began to see Canada in a new light — not as a bastion of the British Empire in North America but as a place where Catholics could breathe easily on the streets, where they could educate their children in their own faith, and where the pace of life was slower, safer, saner. "With us," he wrote of Americans, "life is a fevered and eager race, with them, a slow and merry procession."

Critical to his newfound admiration for Canada was the French fact. In the political compromises that had been hammered out over the previous two decades, separate school legislation emerged that enabled Catholics to educate their children according to their own faith. And in Canada East (present-day Quebec) there was nothing like the nativism that he was experiencing in the United States. Not only that, but during several fact-finding tours of British North America he came to see that most Irish immigrants, Catholic and Protestant alike, were living in

TOP LEFT: DIGITAL COLLECTION AT VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY/XM DA 954.F4 1865; TOP RIGHT: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA 103906

NATION-BUILDING ELOQUENCE

Thomas D'Arcy McGee in 1868.

U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to turn Canada into the "fifty-first state" would come as no surprise to Thomas D'Arcy McGee. More than 160 years ago, the "Orator of Confederation" argued that the union of British North American provinces was necessary, "unless we look forward ... to annexation to the United States."

On May 2,1860, McGee laid out his vision of a "Canadian Federation" in a speech delivered in the legislative assembly of the Province of Canada (comprising present-day Ontario and Quebec). Noting that "thought outruns the steam car and hope outflies the telegraph," he urged his fellow parliamentarians to act swiftly to ensure the "prosperity, freedom and honour of this incipient Northern nation."

The stirring conclusion of his speech declared: "I look to the future of my adopted country with hope, though not without anxiety; I see in the not remote distance, one great nationality bound, like the shield of Achilles, by the blue rim of ocean – I see it quartered into many communities – each disposing of its internal affairs – but all bound together by free institutions, free intercourse, and free commerce; I see within the round of that shield, the peaks of the Western mountains and the crests of the Eastern waves – the winding Assinaboine (sic), the five-fold lakes, the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, the Saguenay, the St. John, and the Basin of Minas – by all these flowing waters, in all the valleys they fertilise, in all the cities they visit in their courses, I see a generation of industrious, contented, moral men, free in name and in fact – men capable of maintaining, in peace and in war, a Constitution worthy of such a country."

McGee would live to see the Confederation of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia in 1867. He was assassinated before his vision of a Canada stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts could be realized. – *Kate Jaimet*

the countryside, operating their own farms, and doing reasonably well. In 1857, Irish-Catholic community leaders invited him to Montreal to start up a newspaper and run for Parliament.

Four years earlier McGee had visited Niagara Falls, witnessed the Union Jack flying on the Canadian side of the border, and recorded the cataract of rage in his heart at the sight of the "cursed flag" that had been responsible for so many Irish deaths. "My blood leaps wilder than this water/ On seeing thee, thou sign of slaughter," he wrote in a poem so incendiary that Irish-Canadian author Mary Ann Sadlier later omitted it from her collection of McGee's poetry. In 1857, things looked very different. "The British flag does indeed fly here," he wrote, "but it casts no shadow."

He accepted the invitation and, in December 1857, was elected to the Province of Canada's legislative assembly.

And so began his remarkable career in Canada. "I look to the future of my adopted country with hope, though not without anxiety," he wrote in his most famous speech in support of Confederation. The hope came from a sense of potential, a vision in which people from different regions and with different religions could live together in a society that was inclusive, generous-spirited, and open-minded. The anxiety came from a fear that the "former feuds" of Ireland would take root in Canada and tear the country apart.

McGee was thirty-two years old when he moved to Canada along with his wife, Mary, and his two surviving children, Frasia and Peggy (a daughter and son had died the year before, and another daughter had died earlier in the decade). By this time he had not only shed his earlier anglophobia but also left behind the extreme Catholicism he'd espoused in the United States. He was still a devout Catholic, but he no longer viewed Protestants as his enemies.

The contrast between his dishevelled appearance and his soaring oratory drew many comments, as did his vivacity and sense of humour. He had remarkable intellectual and social stamina, writing a dozen books, hundreds of parliamentary speeches, more than three hundred poems, well over a thousand lectures and innumerable newspaper articles — all before the age of forty-three. And he did this while frequently going on whisky benders, discussing politics and literature well into the early hours of the morning. Efforts of his wife to rein in his drinking were only intermittently successful; living with him cannot have been easy.

He was best known as the Orator of Confederation, the man whose speeches gave poetic voice to the possibilities of the future. Confederation might seem normal and natural now, yet, at the time, it was anything but. There were many regional, religious, ethnic, and linguistic divisions within the country, and the anti-Confederate movement was strong, particularly in Quebec and the Maritimes, as well as in Newfoundland. To push it through took great political skill, some bribery, and powerful arguments — and McGee excelled at the latter.

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Less noticed were his practical contributions to the cause. He encouraged Reform Party Leader George Brown to form a coalition government with Conservative John A. Macdonald, achieving a foundation of political stability necessary for negotiations with the other British North American colonies. And he organized a public-relations tour of the Maritime provinces to make the case for Confederation.

McGee did not play a prominent role in the 1864 Quebec Conference that hammered out the details, except in one crucial regard: the establishment of minority educational rights. Support for separate Catholic schools had been a constant factor in his Canadian career, and he had always insisted that Catholics in Canada West (present-day Ontario) should have educational equality with Protestants in Canada East (present-day Quebec). At the Quebec Conference, he got what he wanted. "So far as I know," he said, "this is the first Constitution ever given to a mixed people, in which the conscientious rights of the minority, are made a subject of formal guarantee." It was one of his proudest achievements.

Yet McGee's anxiety about extremist forms of nationalism in Canada did not abate. His fears had originally focused on the ultra-Protestant and anti-Catholic Orange Order, which was going from strength to strength in the mid-nineteenth century. In Canada West, almost all of the elite and a majority of the population were Protestant, the result of immigration by British loyalists after the American Revolution and subsequent waves of English, Scottish, and Irish Protestant settlers through the first half of the nineteenth century. But Irish Catholics also began to arrive around the 1820s to farmstead or to work in lumber camps and canal construction — and their numbers increased as a result of the Famine in the 1840s. Although in many cases Catholics and Protestants lived peacefully side by side, religious tension also existed between the two groups, and this was fanned by militant organizations like the Orange Order.

By the early 1860s, a more immediate threat was emerging — this time from the Catholic side of the religious divide. Founded in 1858, the Fenian Brotherhood was dedicated to raising money, arms, and volunteers to liberate Ireland from British rule. The organization could do this openly in the United States, but in the British North American colonies Fenianism was associated with treason. The brotherhood was gaining ground in Ireland and the United States, and it was making serious inroads into the Irish-Catholic community in Canada. By 1865, one U.S. faction of the brotherhood was planning to attack Britain's North American empire, and in the following summer it put its plans into practice.

On June 1, 1866, around eight hundred Fenian soldiers in the Irish Republican Army (IRA) crossed the Niagara River into the Niagara Peninsula, planted the Fenian flag, and declared their intention to liberate Canada from the yoke of British oppression. Eight hundred kilometres to the east, the main force of the IRA was gathering in Vermont with the objective of marching on Montreal. Both armies were quickly pushed back, but the threat of further attacks remained.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee's wife, Mary McGee, in an undated photo prior to 1871.

"THE BRITISH FLAG DOES INDEED FLY HERE, BUT IT CASTS NO SHADOW."

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Ottawa tailor Patrick James Whelan was convicted of murdering Thomas D'Arcy McGee.

BY 1867 McGEE HAD RECEIVED SO MANY DEATH THREATS THAT HE PASTED THEM INTO A BOOK AND DREW A SKULL AND CROSSBONES ON THE COVER.

For McGee, it was essential that Irish-Canadian Catholics distance themselves from the Fenian Brotherhood, even if they sympathized with its goal of freeing Ireland from British rule. If Fenianism took hold in Canada, it would trigger an escalating cycle of conflict in which extremists on both sides of the ethno-religious divide would come to the fore — and in which Irish Catholics, as the minority group, would come off worse. Determined to defeat the movement, he travelled throughout the country giving anti-Fenian speeches to Irish clubs and societies, wrote numerous newspaper articles exposing their clandestine operations in Canada, and supported the suspension of habeas corpus — allowing the government to hold suspects without trial — to counter the threat.

Not surprisingly, those Irish Catholics who either supported or were ambivalent about Fenianism reacted strongly against him. Contrasting his earlier radical Irish nationalism with his current conservatism, they regarded him as a traitor who had sold out his native country for power and prestige, and who by exposing Fenianism in Canada was informing on his fellow countrymen. As sure as God is in heaven, asserted one Matthias D. Phelan in 1865, the Fenians would "wreak retributive vengeance on the parties who threw obstacles in their way. Remember this Kanuck Darky (sic) McGee." By 1867 he had received so many death threats that he pasted them into a book and drew a skull and crossbones on the cover.

Shortly after 2:00 a.m. on April 7, 1868, McGee, then Member of Parliament for Montreal West, left a late-night sitting of the House of Commons and walked down Sparks Street toward his boarding house. He heard footsteps behind him, quickened his pace, fumbled for his keys, and was shot at close range just as he was opening the door. His murder had all the hallmarks of a hit job by local Fenians, who meted out the traditional punishment for traitors and informers — a bullet in the back of the head.

Police soon received a tipoff pointing them in the direction of an Irish Catholic named Patrick James Whelan. Searching his lodgings, they found Fenian literature, an unsent death threat (to a person unknown), and a revolver that looked like it had recently been fired. The more they investigated, the more the evidence piled up. Reports that Whelan had frequently threatened to kill McGee — and had set out on two occasions to do just that — were compounded by the statement of a witness who saw Whelan making threatening gestures to McGee in Parliament on the night of the assassination. After Whelan's arrest, a detective and a prisoner who were eavesdropping on his conversations in his cell claimed that he boasted to another inmate about killing McGee.

At the trial, Whelan's lawyer — John Hillyard Cameron, a Grand Master of the Orange Order — mounted a brilliant defence, challenging every element of the prosecution's case and arguing that its evidence was either circumstantial or untrustworthy. It wasn't enough, nor were Whelan's protestations of innocence. "I never took that man's blood," Whelan insisted after the guilty verdict was announced.

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Crowds pay their respects at the funeral procession of Thomas D'Arcy McGee in Montreal on April 13, 1868.

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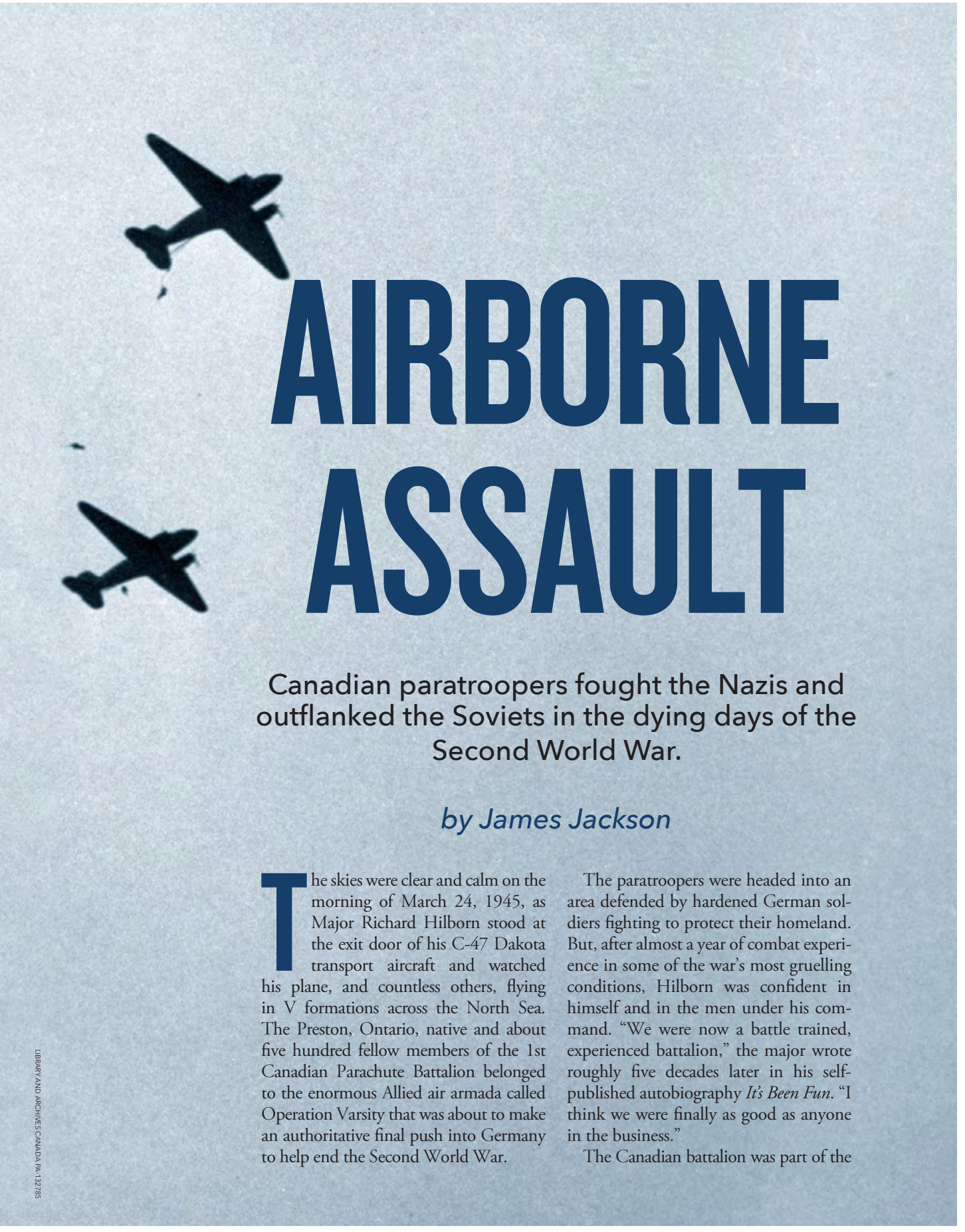
But he said something else, shortly before his death sentence was carried out — that he was there when McGee was shot, and that he knew the man who pulled the trigger. And there is an intriguing piece of information that was never brought up in the trial: According to a well-placed informer in the Fenian headquarters in New York, Whelan was not simply a bit player with a grudge against McGee; he was actually one of Canada's leading Fenians.

We live in increasingly difficult and dangerous times, in which conflicts in other countries have repercussions in Canada — as they did during McGee's life. Then, there were sometimes-violent tensions between Irish-Catholic nationalists and Irish Protestants; now, we have sometimes-violent tensions between Sikhs and Hindus, Jews and Muslims. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are both on the rise. McGee faced down extreme manifestations of nativism, mainly in the United States, but to some extent in Canada as well. For all the twists and turns in his life, one of the constants was his hostility to the abuse of power, whether it came from above or below.

Confronting all of these problems — conflicts imported from abroad, ethno-religious tensions, nativism, and the abuse of power — McGee displayed extraordinary moral courage as he worked towards a form of Canadian nationalism that would be pluralistic, generous-spirited, and broad-minded; one that emphasized the importance of reason, compassion, and kindly feelings, and that strove to find common ground among diverse groups. As we face our own challenges, we may remember this man who also lived through turbulent times and let his voice of moderation echo into our present.

Paratroopers of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion jump from Douglas Dakota transport planes on Salisbury Plain, England, on February 6, 1944.



AIRBORNE ASSAULT

Canadian paratroopers fought the Nazis and outflanked the Soviets in the dying days of the Second World War.

by James Jackson

The skies were clear and calm on the morning of March 24, 1945, as Major Richard Hilborn stood at the exit door of his C-47 Dakota transport aircraft and watched his plane, and countless others, flying in V formations across the North Sea. The Preston, Ontario, native and about five hundred fellow members of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion belonged to the enormous Allied air armada called Operation Varsity that was about to make an authoritative final push into Germany to help end the Second World War.

The paratroopers were headed into an area defended by hardened German soldiers fighting to protect their homeland. But, after almost a year of combat experience in some of the war's most gruelling conditions, Hilborn was confident in himself and in the men under his command. "We were now a battle trained, experienced battalion," the major wrote roughly five decades later in his self-published autobiography *It's Been Fun*. "I think we were finally as good as anyone in the business."

The Canadian battalion was part of the

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Paratroopers of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion prepare for a patrol in Bande, Belgium, on January 15, 1945. Left to right: Sergeant T.H. Pasquei, privates D.F. Hockin, L.L. Gagnier, N. Cahute, R.E. Fralick, H.L. Anderson and E.C. Blais.

6th British Airborne Division, integrated into the division's 3rd Parachute Brigade under the command of Brigadier James Hill. The Canadians had left England at 7:30 a.m. amid an armada launched from twenty-six different airfields that included more than 1,600 troop transport planes, 1,300 gliders, and nearly 900 escort fighters. The aircraft were poised to deliver approximately sixteen thousand American, British, and Canadian paratroopers — along with vehicles, equipment, and weapons — across the mighty Rhine River into western Germany.

In the days following the invasion eighty years ago, newspapers would claim that the line of aircraft leaving the coast of England was nearly 250 kilometres long and that it took more than an hour to pass over any given point. It was the largest airborne assault in history.

On the ground below, the Allies had swept across Western Europe following the successful D-Day invasion of June 6, 1944, liberating Paris in August and Antwerp, Belgium, in September 1944. In January 1945, the Allies repulsed a major German counteroffensive known as the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxembourg. The men of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion fought as ground troops in that battle before returning to England to regroup.

Then in February 1945, British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's 21st Army Group — which included British, Canadian, and American divisions — launched a major offensive to push Hitler's armies back toward the Rhine. The Germans retreated across the river, blowing up the bridges behind them, but Hitler still would not admit defeat. The Allies resolved to press their offensive across the Rhine and into the German heartland.

After nightfall on March 23, British, Canadian, and American ground troops began crossing the Rhine near the German city of Wesel in an action known as Operation Plunder. While artillery strikes and bombing runs weakened

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the German defensive positions, the ground troops used amphibious tracked landing craft and portable, prefabricated truss bridges known as Bailey bridges to cross the flowing water. Meanwhile, the airborne soldiers were tasked with parachuting directly into the German front lines on the east side of the river to engage the enemy in close-range combat.

Unlike D-Day, when parachutists dropped into occupied France under the cover of night, the Rhine drop was a daytime operation; the paratroopers would take advantage of the light to stay organized, reach their rendezvous points quickly, and overwhelm the Germans' defensive positions.

Flying at an altitude of between 100 and 150 metres, the Canadians arrived at the drop zone near the towns of Hamminkeln and Wesel at 9:55 a.m. Green lights switched on inside the planes, signalling that it was time to jump, and Hilborn and the other Canadians hurled themselves into the air.

It took about seventeen seconds for each paratrooper to reach the ground, making them prime targets for anti-aircraft and machine-gun fire. "What are all these bees doing at 300, 400 feet in the month of March?" Private Morris Zakaluk thought during his descent to the battlefield, before he realized that the buzzing was actually the sound of enemy bullets zipping by him.

Twenty-three Canadians were killed and forty were wounded during the assault, some while still in mid-air. Two more were captured. The Canadian battalion's commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Jevon "Jeff" Nicklin, was among the dead. His parachute had become entangled in a tree above a German gun crew, and he had seven bullet holes in his pelvis when his body was found. Following Nicklin's death, Lieutenant-Colonel Fraser Eadie was named battalion commander, while Hilborn was promoted to second-in-command.

For those who made it safely to the ground, the battle had just begun. The Canadians were ordered to seize the forest along the south-western half of the drop zone, secure nearby farm buildings and houses, and prepare for German counterattacks. The battalion completed its objectives within hours, as German troops either retreated or surrendered on the battlefield. "It really was flat-out fighting until about noon," Hilborn told the Canadian Press a few days later, while Eadie described it as "two hours of real killing."

THE BATTALION COMPLETED ITS OBJECTIVES WITHIN HOURS, AS GERMAN TROOPS EITHER RETREATED OR SURRENDERED ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

Lieutenant (later Major) Richard Hilborn has his harness adjusted by Major H. Fraser at the Royal Air Force Training School in Ringway, England, on April 4, 1944.

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Top: Paratroopers of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion in action during a training exercise on Salisbury Plain, England, on February 6, 1944. Above: The battalion's Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel G.F.P. Bradbrooke, left, and his deputy commander, Major Jeff A. Nicklin, outside battalion headquarters at Carter Barracks in Bulford, England, in January 1944. After D-Day, Bradbrooke was reassigned and Nicklin was promoted to battalion commander.

One Canadian parachutist, medical orderly Corporal Frederick Topham, earned the Victoria Cross for heroism that day. After seeing two other medical orderlies killed while trying to treat an injured soldier, the twenty-seven-year-old Topham raced across an open field, administered first aid under intense gunfire, then carried the soldier to safety while disregarding his own injury — a shot through the nose. Later that day he pulled three men from a burning armoured personnel carrier.

After the fighting ended, Hilborn was among a group of men who volunteered to recover Nicklin's body, which they wrapped in his parachute. "To me he was a fine leader, a great friend, and I still regret that I was denied the opportunity of seeing more of him after the war," Hilborn wrote in his autobiography. In an interview with *Canada's History*, Hilborn's son Michael said the major had "insisted on going" to recover Nicklin. "I bet it was tough. He was very fond of him."

Total casualties for the paratroopers that morning were high. Of the 7,200 members of the 6th British Airborne, about 1,400 were killed or wounded. Another 1,300 of the 9,600 American 17th Airborne were killed or wounded. The assault over the Rhine was the last major airborne operation of the Second World War. Having won the battle, the Canadians and British enjoyed a brief respite to recover and regroup while they awaited new marching orders.

Meanwhile, on the eastern front, the Russian army was advancing relentlessly. Having re-entered Kyiv, Ukraine, in November 1943, the Soviets marched into Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland in 1944. By January 1945 they had taken the Polish capital of Warsaw and had their sights set on winning the race to Berlin. In February 1945, with victory over Germany growing more likely, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin met in Yalta on the Crimean Peninsula to discuss the division of post-war Germany into American, British, French, and Soviet zones.

Although the German Army's defeats in the east meant good news for the Allies, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe Dwight Eisenhower worried that the territory occupied by the Russians would fall under Soviet communist dictatorship after the war. This concern applied, among other places, to German-occupied Denmark. The British and

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After landing near Wesel, on the Rhine River, on March 24, 1945, the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion troops and their comrades in the 6th British Airborne Division trekked some five hundred kilometres to Wismar, arriving on May 2 – just hours before the Soviet Red Army. The battalion suffered four casualties in a battle near Ricklingen on April 8. On April 15, they witnessed Nazi horrors in the newly liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

MIKE BECHTHOLD

Americans decided to push east as quickly as possible, not only to cut off the forces of German Field Marshal Ernst Busch in the north but also to act as a doorstop against the Russian advance through northern Germany.

The key objective was the German port city of Wismar, 250 kilometres northwest of Berlin on the Baltic Sea. Strategically positioned along the northern coastline, the picturesque medieval town of red-brick buildings and cobblestone walkways held such tactical importance that the Nazis had expanded its port and shipbuilding facilities throughout the war. Soviet Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, one of the Red Army's most prominent commanders, was moving toward Wismar from the east with orders to secure the city and continue all the way to the Danish border.

So on March 26, 1945, the Canadians and their British compatriots in the 6th Airborne Division were given new marching orders — a five-hundred-kilometre trek across Germany to secure Wismar before the Russians. "The drive to Wismar and the drive to the Baltic to seal off Denmark was clearly a high-level political decision at the Eisenhower and Churchill level," says Terry Copp, a leading scholar of Canadian military history and director emeritus of the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada. "If you look at the map and you're trying to seal off Denmark, it pretty much has to be at Wismar."

The toll of Operation Varsity, Copp says, had convinced even the most ardent airborne advocates that they should avoid another parachute operation. Instead, the paratroopers mounted the tanks of the British Royal Scots Greys regiment and prepared to travel overland to the Baltic coast.

The trek to Wismar promised to be gruelling for the Canadians. But they had been prepared by years of rigorous training — at Fort Benning (now Fort Moore), Georgia, starting in 1942; at Canadian training base Shilo in Manitoba beginning in April 1943; and at Carter Barracks in Bulford, England. Their training went beyond the

Corporal N.R.V. Chapman, a paratrooper candidate, trains with a shock harness at the U.S. Army Parachute Training School in Fort Benning, Georgia, in September 1943.

"THE TOUGHNESS REQUIRED OF A PARACHUTIST CANNOT BE OVERESTIMATED."

usual boot camp exercises and sought to shape the men into an elite group of soldiers plucked from the very best volunteers that the country could muster.

Selection standards were high, with volunteers scored from "A" (most desirable) to "E" (least desirable). Only those who achieved an A rating were allowed to begin airborne training, which meant roughly half of all volunteers were rejected. Aggressiveness, emotional stability, high motivation, and self-reliance were prerequisites for an A rating, as well as a high standard of mental, physical, and psychological fitness. Of those who qualified, about a third failed out of the parachute program — some for their inability to complete the physical or mental tests, others because of injuries.

Lieutenant-Colonel D.H. Taylor, commander of A-35 Canadian Parachute Training Centre in Shilo, believed the bulk of the training should be focused on the goal of creating "good, tough soldiers first; jumpers second." Under Taylor, the men endured an eight-week ground-training course before they ever saw a parachute. Only those candidates who passed ground training were eligible to begin the three-week parachute course.

Other testing included a dreaded eighty-kilometre march that had to be done in less than twenty-four hours while wearing full battle dress. Weapons training and accuracy were also given high priority.

Taylor once observed, "the toughness required of a parachutist cannot be overestimated. Men can't quit road marches because they're tired." His remark proved prophetic as the Canadians departed for Wismar. The month-long trek ahead would become a relentless cycle of riding atop tanks and in Jeeps, commandeering enemy vehicles, and old-fashioned marching. Michael Hilborn said his father — an avid sportsman who enjoyed boxing, hockey, and hunting in his youth — was up to the task. "Most of them, actually, these guys were real athletes."

Their advance through Germany was so rapid that they ran into an unexpected problem: what to do with all the German soldiers trying to surrender? By this time, many of the front-line troops realized that the war was lost, and they preferred to surrender to the Canadians and British, rather than take their chances in a Russian prisoner-of-war camp. By April 10, the Canadian Press reported that the paratroopers had captured more than one thousand enemy combatants and "no longer bother to send prisoners back escorted, they merely indicate the

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Paratroopers of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion sit on a Churchill tank in Greven, Germany, circa April 1945. Front row, left to right: Sergeant G. H. Jickels, Private P. G. Mulroy, and Private E. D. Aziz. Second row: Privates L. O. Fuson, J. Humeniuk, G. M. Brown, and R. H. Carlton.

direction and say 'go.'"

The Canadian Press also reported that the maps sent from headquarters to aid in the paratroopers' movements "usually arrive after the areas have been taken." One commander reportedly relied on a high-school atlas, recovered shortly after the jump over the Rhine, to help plan for battle. The Allied resupply lines also had trouble keeping pace with the paratroopers. To stay warm and augment their firepower, the Canadians could sometimes be seen wearing German sheepskin jackets or carrying German guns, like the iconic MP 40 submachine gun or Luger pistol.

But not every German soldier was ready to surrender. On April 8, the paratroopers met a defiant tank and infantry unit near the town of Ricklingen and came under artillery and machine-gun fire. The battalion war diary recorded four casualties. A week later, an enemy aircraft dropped a bomb on B Company, killing two men and wounding two others.

Some of the Canadians witnessed the atrocity of the Nazi regime when their company arrived at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp shortly after it was liberated on April 15. An estimated fifty thousand people died at the camp from 1943 to 1945, including the diarist Anne Frank, and it housed more than sixty thousand prisoners when it was freed. While Eadie and some others entered the camp to survey the scene and help the prisoners, Hilborn chose not to. His ninety-eight-year-old widow, Laurette Hilborn-Pond, said in an interview that he could sense the horrors the camp contained. "He said he didn't need to go. [He said,] 'I knew what was in there.'"

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The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion in London, England, in January 1944.

By the time the paratroopers crossed the Elbe River, about 150 kilometres southwest of Wismar, on April 30, they began encountering long rows of German soldiers and civilians — many of them fleeing the advancing Russians. "They reasoned that the more territory we occupied, the less the Russians could occupy," the war diary entry for May 2 states. "Thousands of German troops lined the roads and crowded the villages, some even cheering us on, though most were a despondent-looking mob."

The battalion rolled into Wismar that afternoon. Just two hours after their arrival, a Russian officer arrived by jeep. According to the battalion diary, the officer was "quite put out to find us sitting on what was the Russians' ultimate objective."

Hilborn was named chief liaison officer with the Russians in Wismar, and he enlisted the help of several battalion members from families of Russian immigrants who could speak the language. The battalion diary and Hilborn's own autobiography suggest the gears of this early diplomacy were greased with plenty of alcohol. "We soon learned we had to down drinks Russian style. None of this sipping of drinks as is our western habit," Hilborn wrote of one meeting. "It was strictly 'down the hatch' with the whole drink," and the glass was immediately refilled.

By that time, Hilborn was confident that the war was all but over. The Allies placed the covers on their artillery and faced them westward to await orders to return home. But the Russians were wary of the Brits and Canadians: They set up a roadblock, restricting access to the area they occupied near the town. The Russian artillery also remained pointed westward, Hilborn wrote.

Though tensions simmered, the weather remained warm and clear. No longer ducking German sniper fire or dodging mortars, the "main problem was how to keep the troops contented and busy" as they awaited the official end of the war, the battalion war diary reported on May 6. Softball, football, and rugby helped pass the time, as did sailing and swimming in the harbour. They were under orders not to fraternize with local civilians or Soviet soldiers.

CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

The morning of May 7 brought news of Germany's unconditional surrender. Gin, whisky, vodka, wine, and schnapps flowed in Wismar as the Canadians celebrated the end of hostilities in Europe. Even the war diary entry for the day reported "everybody had a grand time acquiring the inevitable hangover." The next day, May 8, was declared Victory in Europe (VE) Day by Churchill, and the Canadian and British troops held joint celebrations with the Russians.

The Canadians remained in Wismar for nearly two more weeks, holding a victory march on May 11 and a memorial service on May 13. Finally, on May 19, the Canadians were transported to a nearby airfield for return to England; the last of the British troops followed by July 1. Returning to Canada that summer aboard the former French luxury liner *Île de France*, the paratroopers were welcomed as heroes by parades in Halifax and Toronto. Following Japan's surrender on September 2, the unit was officially disbanded on September 30, 1945.

In the end, the Canadian paratroopers' rush to Wismar didn't stop the city from being shut behind the Iron Curtain. According to the agreements drawn up during the Yalta Conference in February, Wismar fell about sixty kilometres inside the Soviet zone of occupation. It remained part of communist East Germany until 1990.

Still, the Canadians had done their job to limit the Soviet advance westward towards Denmark. After enduring five years of brutal Nazi occupation, the country avoided falling under Stalin's thumb. The only exception was the offshore island of Bornholm, which the Soviet army occupied from May 10, 1945, to April 5, 1946.

The experience of the Second World War stuck with Hilborn and other battalion members forever. Michael Hilborn said it was decades before his father could talk with him about the conflict, and Laurette Hilborn-Pond can still recall talks she had with her late husband near the end of his life about his wartime experience. "It wasn't easy to kill people," she said, with a long pause. "We had long conversations about that. I like to feel that I really helped him, and he could talk to me about it."

Tailor Made

GINAWA NG MANANAHI

Thousands of Filipina garment workers found a better life in Canada, thanks to a unique labour-immigration scheme.

by Jon Malek

It was September 23, 1972, and twenty-eight-year-old Lydia Peralta stood in the airport in Manila, preparing to board her flight to Canada. Her family had travelled for hours from their farm in the northern Philippine province of Pangasinan to see her off. Waiting in line along with twenty-two other women recruited by the Winnipeg clothing manufacturer Silpit, she opened her passport to check her visa — only to notice that the name on the document was not her own. She felt a wave of panic. At that moment, another woman in the group raised her voice: "Who is Lydia Peralta? Why is her visa in my passport?" The recruitment agency had evidently mixed up their paperwork. Relieved, Lydia retrieved her visa and boarded the plane.

Four days earlier, twenty-six-year-old Helen Padua had left on the same journey from the Philippine capital. Although she grew up just one town apart from Lydia, the two women didn't know each other; they would meet, and become friends, only after settling in Winnipeg. But similar circumstances motivated both of them to leave their homes and families: Determined to escape from the traditional roles imposed on women in provincial Philippine society, they sought independence and financial stability by pursuing their ambitions beyond their native country.

By leaving when they did, the two women narrowly missed living under the military dictatorship of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos. The day after Lydia's plane took off,

ILLUSTRATED HEADLINE AND DROP CAP: JONATO DALAYOAN. OPPOSITE PAGE: COURTESY LYDIA CANSINO

Lydia Cansino (née Peralta), left, enjoys her first snowy day in Winnipeg along with friend Emena Priscilla in November 1972.

Women sew clothing in a Winnipeg garment plant in 1970.

Marcos declared martial law — a situation that lasted for the next fourteen years.

Although their lives diverged in many ways, both Helen and Lydia benefitted from a program that, from 1968 to the 1980s, offered thousands of Filipina clothing workers a rare opportunity to immigrate to Canada, which would have been difficult — if not impossible — through other channels.

In the history of the Filipino community in Canada, the garment industry looms large, demonstrating the relationship between labour needs and immigration policies. However, the industry formed just one aspect of its workers' lives in Canada, and sometimes not an important one. To Lydia and Helen, both now senior citizens, what is most important is their sense of accomplishment and joy at the homes and families they have built. Their contributions to Canadian society extend far beyond their early years working in clothing factories.

Helen and Lydia came of age in the 1950s and 1960s during a period of postwar reconstruction in the Philippines marked by economic growth that would falter by the early 1970s. Both lived modest, hard-working lives on farms, and were exposed early to the traditional roles of women in provincial life. Lydia's parents died when she was young, forcing her to leave school and take on domestic responsibilities, such as housekeeping, for her older sister. As she grew older, her siblings expected her to stay home and marry.

Helen encountered similar pressures. Although her parents valued education, there were few professions deemed respectable for women. Initially, she pursued a nursing degree, but the disapproval of her father and brothers forced her to withdraw from the program. She spent a miserable year working in her family's fields. "Oh my God, it's so hard," she recalled in an interview in 2024. "All the jobs in the field I did. ... You're out there, yeah, rain or shine."

At the end of that year, her father presented her with two options: remain a farmer or attend school to become a teacher. Teaching was one of the few socially acceptable careers for women, as it aligned with traditional expectations of them as nurturing, mother-like figures responsible for raising and morally guiding children. Bowing to her father's wishes, she enrolled in a teaching program in a local university.

The rapid growth in consumer and material culture that democratic states like the Philippines experienced during the postwar period was particularly strong in urban centres. Because this growth was slower to reach rural regions, the allure of city life loomed large for young people. "I'm so ambitious," Lydia recalled. "I said, I don't want to live in the province. ... I don't want to live as a farmer. ... And I said, if I go to Manila, I will work in there." She chuckled, adding:

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"My dream is, I have my purse with me, going somewhere else like that."

When she was in her mid-twenties, Lydia moved to Manila without her family's support — a significant act of defiance against traditional patriarchal life trajectories. She found employment at Philippine-American Embroidery, with little thought of eventually emigrating. For her, the move to the capital was about attaining personal independence, rather than pursuing life abroad.

In contrast, Helen's move to Manila was driven by a clear goal: to develop the skills necessary for employment overseas. After finishing her teaching degree, she visited Manila for a one-week holiday to see her brother and sister-in-law, Benigno and Estelita Naron. While the prospect of life as a provincial teacher felt stifling, Manila was a place that "looked like the future," she recalled. She longed for what Benigno and Estelita had: their own home and the financial stability to afford the things they wanted.

Helen's brother and his wife encouraged her to consider working abroad. She knew that the garment industry in Canada was hiring Filipinas, and working for Estelita, who owned a small dressmaking shop in their home, would give her the experience needed to apply. Still, her decision to move to Manila and work as a dressmaker, instead of a teacher, did not go over well with her remaining family in Pangasinan: "[My brother] is mad because of — what is the use of graduating, if you don't use it, you know?" she remembered. "And I said, in the first place, I told you already that this is not the right course that I want."

Canada's immigration system underwent a major overhaul in 1967, replacing discriminatory race- and country-based restrictions with a points system that assessed applicants based on education, profession, language ability, and wealth. This happened at a fortuitous time for garment workers and manufacturers.

Since the end of the Second World War, Canada's clothing industry had relied on foreign labour, because local workers found the jobs undesirable. By the 1960s, Canada's clothing-and-textile industry was booming. But as businesses expanded, factories faced chronic labour shortages, compounded by the declining flow of workers from traditional southern-European sources like Italy.

Winnipeg had 5,200 textile workers employed in various factories, and it was estimated that hundreds more workers were needed, while demand would only grow. The need was immediate, as Winnipeg companies estimated they were working

CANADIAN SPORTSWEAR
OLYMPIC PANT & SPORTSWEAR CO. LTD.
GIRLS WORLD FASHIONS CTD.
ARTHUR STREET FASHIONS LTD.
BROWN FASHION CO. LTD.

Top: The Silpit building in Winnipeg in July 2024. The company recruited garment workers from the Philippines beginning in 1968.

Above: Recruits, left to right, Siony (last name unknown), Maxima Punzal, Lydia Cansino (née Peralta), and Francisca Maramag stand beside the Silpit building in September 1972.

TOP RIGHT: GREG PETZOLD. LOWER RIGHT: COURTESY LYDIA CANSINO

Top: Helen Padua, left, stands with a co-worker inside the Westcott garment factory in June 1973.

Above: Lydia Cansino (née Peralta) poses beside her first TV set in her Winnipeg apartment in 1972.

at fifty per cent of their capacity and losing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of business as a result.

Correspondence between industry leaders and government officials reveals that, in 1968, they were looking to the Philippines — which already had a thriving garment sector — as a potential replacement source for labour. Working with provincial and federal governments, garment manufacturers in Winnipeg set up recruitment schemes in Manila, offering jobs that came with permanent-residency status.

In October 1968, the first wave of Filipina garment workers arrived in Winnipeg, a city that throughout the 1960s and 1970s would absorb thousands of these workers due to its acute labour shortages. Estelita Naron went to Canada on this program in 1971 and found employment at Westcott, a clothing factory in Winnipeg. As a floor supervisor there with some influence, she was able to secure a job offer for her sister-in-law Helen the following year without an interview, providing her a smooth path to permanent residency. Still, it entailed personal sacrifices: Helen had to leave behind her sweetheart, Lino Padua, because the immigration program only accepted single people.

While Helen's family was sad to see her leave home, even her father recognized the benefits that moving to Canada offered: "If you're going to stay here, you have no life here," she recalled him saying.

Without a family connection to help her get a job, Lydia had to pass through the formal application procedure to take part in the immigration scheme. She first heard about two visiting Canadian recruiters from her co-workers in Manila. By that time, she had three years of experience using high-speed modern sewing machines — one of the key skills the recruiters sought.

When Lydia arrived at the hotel where the recruitment was taking place, she found the waiting room filled with other women, some quietly anxious, others chatting nervously. Five hours later, when her name was finally called, she entered a small room where one Canadian and one Filipina recruiter awaited her. Lydia completed the sewing test in just ten minutes.

After the test, Lydia felt a surge of anxiety. Her future seemed to hinge entirely on this opportunity. Without a strong educational background, she feared she might not stand out. However, she was confident in her sewing skills, had a working knowledge of English from caring for her cousin's children while he served in the U.S. Navy, and possessed a fierce determination to improve her life. While working abroad had not been in her long-term plans — and she had recently met her future husband, Manny Cansino, while on a bus ride home to Pangasinan from Manila — passing the test to become a garment worker set her on a path toward a new future.

When Lydia landed in Winnipeg, she was surprised to find a welcoming party of dozens of people waiting for her. It had become the custom for Filipina garment workers who were already in Winnipeg to greet new workers

TOP LEFT: COURTESY HELEN PADUA. LOWER LEFT: COURTESY LYDIA CANSINO

at the airport, often accompanying the representatives of the companies that recruited the women.

A manager from Silpit divided the new arrivals into two groups: those who had family or friends to pick them up and those whose living arrangements had been organized by Silpit. Like many clothing workers, Lydia received a loan from Silpit to help with her initial costs in Winnipeg. The loans — usually around $150 to $200 — were forgiven over two years, as long as the worker stayed with the company. This system, along with the company's role in arranging living accommodations, eased a precarious part of the immigration process. It allowed Filipinas who might not have been able to save for their first few months — especially given the high costs of immigration paperwork — the opportunity to move to Canada.

The week after Lydia arrived, the city was hit by a snowstorm. She still remembers her amazement at the "smoke" that came out of her mouth in the cold air. One of her fondest memories of those first days and weeks was playing outside in the snow with her new friends and co-workers. "I could only see snow in the fridge, you know, the freezer," she said. "But when I came here, it's real."

Even though she didn't have family to welcome her to Canada, Lydia didn't feel lonely. She was surrounded by Filipinas at work and in her apartment building, which was largely rented by Silpit employees.

"They're friendly ... even though you don't know [them]," she recalled. She lived with four other young Filipinas and quickly made more friends at work. Her days cycled between home, work, attending church, grocery shopping, and sometimes walking downtown with her friends to shop, or just window-shop, at The Bay or Eaton's.

> "I COULD ONLY SEE SNOW IN THE FRIDGE, YOU KNOW, THE FREEZER. BUT WHEN I CAME HERE, IT'S REAL."

For Helen, the experience of settling in was somewhat different. She had a smaller social circle and spent more time at home, since her brother and sister-in-law were protective of her activities. She noticed that Winnipeg often seemed to have empty streets, while in the Philippines there were always people milling around outside. The sun sat low on the horizon in these northern latitudes, and it didn't shine as brilliantly as in the tropics. Christmas, especially, felt cold and lonely compared with Pangasinan, where community festivities began in September and ran through December.

Still, the city's growing Filipino community provided opportunities for social connection. At a house party thrown by one of the garment workers, Helen met Lydia, and they bonded over their common roots in Pangasinan. Two years after emigrating, both women returned to the Philippines to marry their sweethearts, in weddings that took place within weeks of each other. By 1975, their husbands had joined them in Canada.

Although their sewing skills gave them entry to Canada, many of the immigrants recruited through the garment-worker program left the industry after a few years, largely due to working conditions and pay. Lydia, like most other workers, was paid per item completed, whereas Helen worked for a standard hourly wage because she liked earning a predictable paycheque that didn't depend on the pace of her sewing. Lydia quit her position at Silpit after the company tried to lower her piecemeal rate, because she worked so quickly that her earnings were too high. There were so many jobs available at the time, she noted, that "if you quit this morning, afternoon you got a job." She worked for a few years in another clothing factory before leaving the industry entirely.

Helen left Westcott after being offered a lower wage increase than her co-workers. She spent a few years working at a candy factory before returning to the textile business at Dominion Tanners, where she worked with her husband, Lino, and Lydia's husband, Manny.

For Lino Padua, the adjustment to Canada was difficult. After arriving, he lived with Helen in her brother's basement, where he felt like a prisoner. "I was thinking Canada is very rich," Lino remembered. "That's what I have in mind. How come I live like in … a cell prison?"

But soon the isolation eased as Lino found work and they moved into their own home, had children, and gradually sponsored many of their own siblings to live in Winnipeg.

Now, Lino declares his happiness in Canada, especially with his sons and their families. "They're good sons," he said with pride. "They are very close [to each other]." He's not sure they would have enjoyed the same quality of life in the Philippines. "I guess I don't think so ... because my surrounding [here] is not as much crime as over there, especially back in the north where I came from."

Like Helen and Lydia, many Filipina garment workers had boyfriends, fiancés, or even husbands and children before immigrating to Canada, but they did not disclose this to government officials. "They make a lie just because, well, you cannot blame them," Lydia explained. "They lie just because [Canadian government officials] want single people to come over here." However, after becoming established in Canada, these women often sponsored their husbands, parents, siblings, and the families of their spouses.

Government sources suggest that the Filipino population

ILLUSTRATED PULL QUOTE: JONATO DALAYOAN

Top: Lydia Cansino, left, and Helen Padua in January 2025.

Above: Manny Cansino, left, and Lino Padua in January 2025.

in Canada prior to the influx of clothing workers was around eight hundred. Determining the number of Filipina garment workers who landed in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s is challenging due to limited specific data, but information on broader trends during this period is available. By 1969, 3,001 Filipinos had immigrated to Canada. Nearly three thousand more were entering annually by 1972, with around one hundred thousand living in Canada as permanent residents or citizens in 1979, according to government records.

In Winnipeg, garment workers built upon a relatively small foundation of health-care professionals to create larger, more robust Filipino communities. The Winnipeg population was celebrated in 1979 when the city was twinned with Manila, a relationship that continues today. As of the 2021 census, more than 950,000 people of Filipino origin lived in Canada — and many can trace their roots back to a pioneering Filipina immigrant.

This was an era in global migration when women, rather than men, increasingly took the lead in initiating immigration, as Lydia and Helen did. Though their new lives came with struggles, they also brought the independence the women desired — an independence that, today, has become a hallmark of their success.

It's New Year's Eve 2024, and eighty-year-old Lydia Cansino is sitting in the living room of her home in Winnipeg. The deep dark of the winter night is held back by lights blazing within the house, the silence of the cold outside overcome by laughter and shouts. Lydia misses the warmth of the Philippines but, if she hasn't come to like the cold of Canada, at least she's used to it. Surrounding her are three generations of family, most of whom are in Canada because of her decision to leave the Philippines in 1972.

She and her family are playing a Filipino New Year's Eve game called *sabog*, where she, as the host, tosses coins for kids and adults to catch. Lydia's wit is sharp, and her jokes delight. She is often seen socializing with her friends and family and playing games, like the Filipino card game *tongits* — in fact, she is known to her close friends as the "Tongits Queen of Manitoba."

Historians sometimes look for grand narratives in topics such as the impact of the garment industry on women's lives. But Lydia and Helen's stories demonstrate one thing: that their experiences working in clothing factories did not define their identities or their lives in Canada. Working in their trade was just the first of many steps taken to find happiness in this country. It was the means through which they came to Canada to create the richer narratives of home, family, and success in life. "Even for me, I don't have much education. I have money here and I could buy what I want," Lydia reflects. "For me, I'm so happy that I am here. I'm so blessed that I am here."

TOP LEFT AND LOWER LEFT: ANDREW WORKMAN

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Governor General Mary Simon, front row and wearing a grey blazer, sits with panellists as the host of the history symposium.

ANDREW WORKMAN

Making room

Five ways to build a more inclusive history. *by Joanna Dawson*

As a child growing up in Nunavik, in Northern Quebec, Mary Simon didn't learn about Inuit history in school. Now the Governor General of Canada, Simon credits her mother and her grandmother with teaching her about their people's experiences. "Their memories, their knowledge and our culture taught me a wealth of history that you couldn't find in textbooks," she explained.

Simon shared that personal reflection during her opening remarks last November, when Canada's History Society hosted the Governor General's History Symposium at the University of Winnipeg. The event encouraged a conversation about strategies for more inclusive approaches to learning about the past.

Simon's words remind us of the vital role we all play in recognizing a more diverse history — one that acknowledges the lived experiences and contributions of Indigenous peoples, women, LGBTQ2+ communities, Black Canadians, Asian Canadians, and others who have been left out of traditional narratives.

The symposium featured a panel of educators, writers, and researchers, as well as an engaged audience of community members.

Here are five key takeaways and reflections from that conversation:

Textbooks were meant to be rewritten.
Would you trust a doctor trained with a book from the 1920s? Just as other fields evolve, so must history education. Updating curricula and resources ensures that we reflect new approaches, tools, and perspectives.

Evidence is found in unexpected places.
Traces of the past go beyond written records. We can find more clues in objects, altered landscapes, traditions, stories, and songs.

Collaboration is key.
Partnering with local communities creates opportunities for people to share their stories and broaden perspectives. Meaningful collaboration builds trust and opens up more possibilities for new approaches.

An inclusive history starts with the present.
Creating spaces that embrace diversity — whether in classrooms, museums, or public discussions — ensures that new perspectives and voices are included in how we interpret the past.

This may hurt a little.
As shared by Jonathan Lainey, curator, Indigenous cultures at the McCord Museum in Montreal: "The success of someone can be the loss and pain of others." Inclusive history requires honesty and a willingness to make space for difficult truths — and sharing power in the process. As Simon noted, "It is never too late to discover our rich and diverse national history."

A colourfully painted barn in Wilno, Ontario, is one of many structures that display the area's Kashubian-Polish heritage.

Polish stronghold

An Ottawa Valley village preserves a unique history that began more than 150 years ago. *by Nancy Payne*

It's hard to say exactly when it dawns on me that I'm somewhere distinctly different — that the familiar Scottish-Irish-English-French characteristics of the Upper Ottawa Valley give way to something else altogether. It could be the wooden crucifixes, more than double my height, that I spot beside the winding roads. It could be the names of the roads themselves — Olsheski, Dombroski, Kopernik — or the folk art on the side of a barn.

But no, the moment when it's clear that the area around the community of Wilno, Ontario, has a history all its own is the appearance of what looks like a ruined church standing on a mound in a field. Intrigued, I turn the car around and enter the deserted site, the sky glowering grey.

The structure that attracted my attention turns out to be a monument recreating a largely destroyed building and set at the top of a flight of steps, each of which bears the name of a street in Warsaw, Poland. It's a tribute to the Grey Ranks — Boy Scouts and Girl Guides who died in the 1944 Warsaw uprising against German occupation.

The fact that the Polish-Canadian community chose this location to erect the Szare Szeregi monument in 1995 is a testament to the enduring Polish roots in the area about a two-hour drive west of Ottawa. Those roots are firmly planted in the village of Wilno — now universally pronounced with a "w" sound, even

NANCY PAYNE

IF YOU GO

GETTING THERE: Wilno is two hours west of Ottawa via highways 417 and 60. A paper map is recommended for exploring the area, because cellphone reception is iffy amid the hills. The Polish Kashub Heritage Museum is open from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily in July and August, or on weekends in late June and early September. Admission is two dollars.

EAT AND DRINK: Bring your appetite to tackle the excellent Polish-Kashub specialties at the Wilno Tavern Restaurant (which is closed on Wednesdays). Or head to the home of the Beaver Tail in nearby Killaloe, where you'll also find lighter fare at tiny, friendly Garth's Kitchen.

EXPLORE: Take time to soak up the views on winding backroads, whether you're following a river, passing through a ghost town, or gazing across a vast valley. Cold War enthusiasts will be fascinated by the derelict Pinetree Line buildings at the top of the hill in the village of Foymount, southeast of Wilno, while fans of Stompin' Tom Connors will get a kick out of venturing a little farther south to visit Mount Saint Patrick and Calabogie Lake (both are mentioned in Connors' song about French-Canadian folk hero "Big Joe Mufferaw").

Top left: The Szare Szeregi (Grey Ranks) monument sits atop a hill south of Wilno. Far left: A relief inside the monument indicates the young Poles who died in the 1944 Warsaw uprising. Left: The altar of St. Mary Catholic Church in Wilno.

though for many generations it was said "Vilno," the old-country way.

In fact, the earliest settlers were Kashubs, having come from the Kashubia region (sometimes spelled Cassubia, or Kaszëbë in their own language) of what was then part of Prussia but is now in northern Poland. When they settled on unceded Algonquin territory in 1858, the newcomers were the first Kashubs in Canada. Six years later, Poles from the Galicia region joined them.

The history of these groups is highlighted in the lovingly restored log buildings that make up the Polish Kashub Heritage Museum and surrounding heritage park in Wilno. They sit on the location of the former railway station, the tracks now long gone. Stones bearing the names of many of the earliest families are nestled among the flower beds, while banners with the Kashub black griffin on a gold background snap in the breeze.

The museum provides a window into generations of everyday life that were rife with hardship and infused with Roman Catholic faith. It also celebrates the distinctive culture that's evident in everything from the floral embroidery and renowned Wilno furniture to a homemade device used to cut cabbage for sauerkraut. Brochures are available regarding different aspects of local history, with several of them in Polish as well as English.

Across busy Highway 60 stands the

ALL PHOTOS NANCY PAYNE

inevitable counterpart of the lost railway station: A former hotel, now the Wilno Tavern, is beloved for its hearty Polish food and live-music nights. Originally known as the Exchange Hotel, it is painted with typically Kashubian winding flowers.

Nearby, St. Mary Catholic Church is the successor to the many smaller churches that once dotted the area. Its hilltop location provides a breathtaking backdrop as I wander the peaceful grounds and cemetery. Inside the church, the altar cloth is decorated with Kashubian embroidery. Mass is still offered in Polish once a week.

A short distance east, a tall wooden crucifix — also perched to take advantage of the vista — marks the arrival of about three hundred Polish settlers to the area in 1864. The region is still popular among Polish Canadians who have their own cottage communities and even a summer scouting camp.

Having been told at the museum to keep an eye out for more of these historical crucifixes, I turn north off the main road. Sure enough, I soon spot a tall, weathered grey cross with the figure of Jesus, and then I see another. The second crucifix is surrounded by an equally neat, equally weathered wooden fence. Mist all around gives the scene a timeless quality that's reinforced by the crucifixes — which were erected both to keep travellers safe and to provide people with a place to pray when they couldn't make it to church.

Now that I know a bit more about the unique history of Wilno and the surrounding area, that feeling of timelessness gives me the impression that I've been let in on a secret, thanks to the pride of the people who continue to share the stories of those others who came before to this remarkably beautiful region.

Above left: A multilingual signpost in Wilno provides directions to different historical sites. Above right: A banner celebrates the Kashubian-Polish history of the area.

Workers of the Williams Manufacturing Company in Montreal's Saint-Henri neighbourhood, circa 1890.

AT THE MUSEUMS

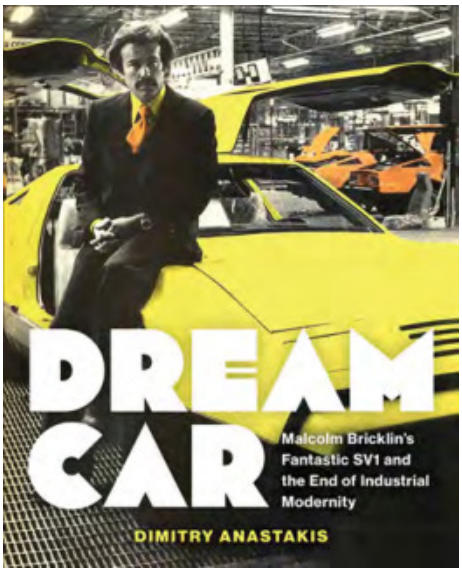
MONTREAL The evolution of life and work in a Montreal neighbourhood over the past 350 years is showcased in an exhibition at Pointe-à-Callière archaeology and history complex. Saint-Henri was at one time the third most densely populated city in Quebec, and its industrial past is illuminated via hundreds of objects and documents, many of which also share the stories of former residents. *The Heart and Soul of Saint-Henri* displays eighteenth- and nineteenth-century objects from archaeological digs as well as photographs, films, models, artworks, and first-hand accounts that testify to the artisanal know-how of residents, their social struggles, and their cultural, religious, and sporting activities. The exhibition continues until May 11.

TOP CENTRE AND RIGHT: NANCY PAYNE. BOTTOM LEFT: SOCIÉTÉ HISTORIQUE DE SAINT-HENRI 1017_065PH3

WHISTLER, B.C. The Audain Art Museum is presenting an exhibition of historical and traditional works by women carvers. It features 127 masks, bowls, panels, and other sculptures in wood and argillite that highlight the contributions of women to Northwest Coast art since the 1950s. According to co-curator Dana Claxton, herself an artist and filmmaker, the exhibition "brings together artists whose practices sustain cultural ways of being in the world," while the "magnificent and magical artworks are tied to the ancients." *Curve! Women Carvers on the Northwest Coast* is accompanied by a catalogue with full-colour images of works by each of the artists, alongside interviews and texts by Claxton and other contributors. The exhibition continues until May 5.

Top left: Cori Savard, *Xiilang (Thunderbird)*, 2021, yellow cedar, pigment, 91 x 91 x 5 cm. Far left: Susan Point, *Gift for Qulqulil Comb*, 2003, red cedar, copper, acrylic paint, 208 x 79 x 10 cm. Left: Freda Diesing, *Old Woman with Labret*, 1973, alder, cedar bark, hair, abalone shell, paint, 20.3 x 22.9 x 15.2 cm.

TOP: PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO: KENJI NAGAI. BOTTOM LEFT: COLLECTION OF ROBERT C. BERGSTROM. BOTTOM CENTRE: AUDAIN ART MUSEUM COLLECTION. PURCHASED WITH FUNDS FROM THE AUDAIN FOUNDATION, 2020.005. PHOTO: KENJI NAGAI



THRILLS AND BILLS

Dream Car: Malcolm Bricklin's Fantastic SV1 and the End of Industrial Modernity

by Dimitry Anastakis
University of Toronto Press,
450 pages, $39.95

Of all the costly scandals and taxpayer-funded boondoggles in recent New Brunswick history, only one elicits a wistful sigh or a hint of pride. That was the Bricklin, the 1970s-era sports car built in the province and shepherded into existence by two iconoclastic men decidedly of their time — serial huckster Malcolm Bricklin and flamboyant politician Richard Hatfield, the province's longest-serving premier. Within two years, the venture failed and the car became a punchline, a memorable symbol of government hubris. "If you're going to have a politically embarrassing failure," Hatfield once declared, "it should be something you have a lot of fun with."

Hatfield had a lot of fun with the Bricklin, driving the car around the province to summer festivals and making it, literally, the vehicle of his 1974 re-election campaign. Dimitry Anastakis has fun with it, too, in this engaging story of the infamous car and its makers. Anastakis positions the Bricklin not only in the context of automotive history but also of pop culture, sexuality, and political philosophy.

After a slightly overlong prologue and introduction, *Dream Car* accelerates to a thrilling speed. The car lore is strong here. Anastakis, a professor of business history, understands the broad cultural currents that shaped the car-manufacturing sector and gave rise to the Bricklin. This is an ambitious book of big ideas.

The crisply argued central premise is that the Bricklin failed but was not quite a failure. Malcolm Bricklin built almost three thousand cars in New Brunswick, the first time since the 1940s that any manufacturer other than the Big Three had achieved that on this continent, "thus forever carving his name into American auto industry lore."

> Bricklin played the role of a swashbuckling, innovative cowboy – but he needed to be a conventional, straitlaced, by-the-numbers manager.

This moment occurred, Anastakis argues, as the golden age of bold, archetypal inventors who sold North Americans the freedom of mobility was ending. It was the dawn of a new era marked by cold, bottom-line profiteering, reliance on government subsidies and bailouts, and concerns about the safety and environmental impact of the automobile.

There were, of course, inherent contradictions. Hatfield wanted well-paying manufacturing jobs; Bricklin sought low-cost labour. To launch his company, Bricklin played the role of a swashbuckling, innovative cowboy; but to make it succeed he needed to be a conventional, straitlaced, by-the-numbers manager. That eluded him, and it continued to elude him for decades after as he leapt from one faddish venture to another.

Still, as Anastakis shows in a chapter titled "Demise (Rebirth)," the Bricklin moment was unforgettable. The name became synonymous with failed government job-creation schemes, but today hundreds of Bricklin owners lovingly maintain their cars. Last fall, dozens of them from around the world gathered in Saint John, New Brunswick, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the car and to tour the one-time manufacturing plant where it was built.

Bricklin himself continues to explore new opportunities and has met with the man to whom he was a "spiritual precursor," Tesla CEO Elon Musk. As for Hatfield, Anastakis traces his scandal-ridden political demise; but, unfortunately, he barely nods at the late premier's own grudging rehabilitation in New Brunswick — now that history has come to focus more on his continuation of major social reforms, his support for official bilingualism, and his moderate Tory government.

The final reckoning for the Bricklin saga is that, five decades later, it provides rich raw material for an astute and able historian like Anastakis. New Brunswick lost $23 million in the deal, and the province wasn't modernized in the way its flamboyant premier had hoped. But, by the metrics of myth and cool, it got back far more than it invested — and it got a great story. Hatfield surely would consider that a success.

Reviewed by **Jacques Poitras**, the author of *Irving vs. Irving: Canada's Feuding Billionaires and the Stories They Won't Tell* and *Pipe Dreams: The Fight for Canada's Energy Future*.

FAMILIAL TIES

Métis Matriarchs: Agents of Transition

edited by Cheryl Troupe
and Doris Jeanne MacKinnon
University of Regina Press,
351 pages, $34.95

The social-history movement that came to prominence in the 1960s sought to explore and to give voice to the lived experiences of everyday people. The movement's aim was to cast aside the claptrap approach to history, one that extolled the supposedly innate cradle-to-grave greatness of kings, presidents, and male leaders. It's been well over fifty years since the movement began, but in their new book Cheryl Troupe and Doris Jeanne MacKinnon prove that there are still stories that are worth uncovering.

Métis Matriarchs sets itself firmly within the parameters of social history, as an edited collection of "quantitative case studies" of Métis women that follow a biographical approach. Using matriarchy as a lens, these life stories offer insights into the collective experiences of Métis women, foregrounding "herstory" rather than the often-privileged masculine historical scholarship of the Canadian prairies.

Readable as a stand-alone piece, the book's introduction provides readers with the contextual structure — the places, spaces, and historical events — through which these Métis matriarchs navigated their lives.

Framing their life histories around kinship and familial ties, the book organizes eight case studies thematically. Themes range from feminine agency, to economic and cultural transition, to resilience and survival. Many of the stories lead back to the Red River Colony in what is now Manitoba, but the majority take place further west after the 1869–70 Resistance in what is now Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

Troupe and MacKinnon's editorial skills bring a commonality of tone to essays written by different female authors while making room for each writer to tell a unique and authentic story using a personal authorial voice.

We learn that Mary Rose Delorme Smith was sold for fifty dollars to a Swedish newcomer, before giving birth to seventeen children and outliving him by decades. Jade McDougall writes about her great-great-grandmother Caroline McNabb receiving a convent education, a marker of "status and social prestige." One chapter is set in Cumberland House, in what is now Saskatchewan, and uses beadwork to explore "women's labouring, living, teaching, dressing, and caring."

When writing about Auxile Lepine Morrison, Janice Cindy Gaudet explains how her grandmother guided her own work: "We did not belong to the stories of victimhood. Instead she was pointing me to generations of Métis women's matriarchal resistance."

Troupe penned the last chapter herself. Telling the story of her ancestor Nora Cummings, who combatted the systemic racism of her day, Troupe writes: "The women in Nora's family taught her to be strong, courageous, and proud of being Métis."

Grounded in the protocols of academic research, *Métis Matriarchs* bridges the gap between potentially dry scholarly work and sentient storytelling. The Métis matriarchs highlighted in the book are memorable characters, their stories laden with plots akin to fiction; their own words, a living dialogue, are often told by their descendants. Many Canadians today will find glimmers of their own past hidden in these words.

Troupe, an assistant professor in the Department of History at the University of Saskatchewan, and MacKinnon, an Alberta-based independent researcher, balance the nuances and diversity of the matriarchs' lives, including the relationships between individuals and the greater collective, all the while shining a light on the commonality these women shared in providing leadership, decision making, and diplomacy.

The academic recognition of the value of oral histories, the uncovering of long-hidden diaries and personal writings, an ever-growing awareness of Métis culture, identity, and voice, and an overdue respect for the role of Métis women are together allowing historians to excavate the lives of ordinary women such as these. We are reminded that there are many stories left to be told.

Reviewed by **Connie Wyatt Anderson**, a Red River Métis. Her great-great-grandmother Rose Chartrand Klyne was a healer and midwife. Her great-grandmother Marie-Hélène Klyne left convent school at fourteen, entering a transactional marriage with a one-generation-off-the-boat widowed Yorkshireman thirty-two years her senior.

MORE WITH LESS

Punching Above Our Weight: The Canadian Military at War Since 1867

by David A. Borys
Dundurn Press,
400 pages, $42

On a spring day in 1941, Veronica Foster took a job at the John Inglis plant on Strachan Avenue in Toronto. The industrial facility had previously manufactured home appliances, but with Canada at war Inglis's twenty-three-acre factory began producing, among other weapons, the .303-calibre Bren guns for the Canadian Army.

Not long after she started working on the assembly line, Foster caught the attention of the National Film Board, which had recently been given the job of creating propaganda films about Canada's war effort. The resulting images of Foster — in working dungarees, her hair tied up in a headscarf, and smoking while posing with a finished Bren — marked an iconic moment of the Second World War.

As noted by author David A. Borys in his latest book, *Punching Above Our Weight,* images of "Ronnie, the Bren Gun Girl" spoke volumes about this country's steps forward in wartime.

"Regardless of general anxieties over changing gender norms," Borys writes, "thousands of women entered jobs that would have been inaccessible in 1939."

Remarkably, in part because the United States did not enter the war until December 1941, the more widely known "Rosie the Riveter" song and Hollywood movie, and the accompanying "We Can Do It!" slogans, did not come along until Foster and her Inglis plant co-workers in Toronto were well on their way to producing forty thousand Bren guns for Allied armies in Europe. Adding the fact that Foster had joined about 1.2 million Canadian women working in jobs traditionally held by men, Borys says women "proved their worth alongside their male colleagues and made a significant contribution to Canada's domestic war effort."

With this book, Borys faced a mammoth challenge: retracing 150 years of Canadian military experience, from the Red River Resistance and the Boer War through to twentieth-century peacekeeping and Canada's longest-ever war in Afghanistan. To this end, he includes accounts and perspectives that are as culturally significant — and as influential to battle outcomes — as the legion of women workers who backed the attack at home during the Second World War.

In 1950, and with the newly formed United Nations compelling fifty nations to uphold the peace, war broke out between North Korea and South Korea. While Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's government initially hesitated to send troops, External Affairs Minister Lester Pearson argued that Korea was "an important test for the newly formed Cold War Alliance." Consequently, between 1950 and 1953, the Canadian government sent twenty-seven thousand volunteer ground troops as the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade, plus eight Royal Canadian Navy tribal-class destroyers and about a thousand RCAF personnel. Most of the latter served in 426 Transport Squadron, while others, including twenty-four RCAF fighter pilots, flew in the U.S. Air Force.

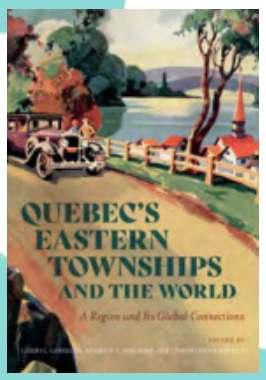
Borys gives ample coverage to what is perhaps the most extraordinary Korean War operation by Canadians, one that tested the skill of the RCN's Jeffry Brock, commander of HMCS *Cayuga*: Early in the war, the Canadians were called upon to evacuate U.S. troops, with their backs to the sea, from the North Korean seaport of Chinnamp'o.

Facing a massive Chinese army onslaught, not to mention treacherous winter conditions up Daido-ko River, "Brock made the risky decision to lead the [naval flotilla] into the estuary the night of December 4 … to successfully sail in and cover the withdrawal, while inflicting damage on enemy infrastructure." Brock earned the

Stories from Quebec

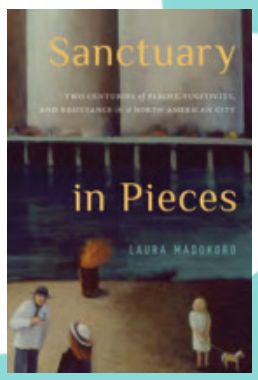
Montreal After Dark
Nighttime Regulation and the Pursuit of a Global City
Matthieu Caron
Paperback | $34.95 | 328pp

"Brings Montreal's postwar histories together through the innovative lens of a night studies perspective."
–Julie Podmore, Concordia University



Quebec's Eastern Townships and the World
A Region and Its Global Connections
Edited by Cheryl Gosselin, Andrew C. Holman, and Christopher Kirkey
Paperback | $32.95 | 438pp

"Freshens current views about the Townships while emphasizing that the region must be understood in larger contexts."
–Chad Gaffield, University of Ottawa



Sanctuary in Pieces
Two Centuries of Flight, Fugitivity, and Resistance in a North American City
Laura Madokoro
Paperback | $37.95 | 348pp

"Demands that readers rethink our understanding not only of Montreal's past as a place of refuge, but of the historian's craft itself." –Steven High, author of *Deindustrializing Montreal*

McGill-Queen's University Press

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Distinguished Service Cross for the Dunkirk-like rescue, which helped to consolidate the United Nations position along the 38th parallel for the rest of the war.

Equally enduring, Borys argues, were operations of the Canadian Armed Forces in Afghanistan following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when the UN and NATO chose to challenge the Taliban's overthrow of the Afghan government. Forty thousand CAF servicewomen and servicemen participated in Allied operations during the war in Afghanistan, and Borys counts Canada's "clear-hold-build" operations, "whereby the Canadian battle group would focus their counter-insurgency efforts on a specific village," among its most distinguished achievements.

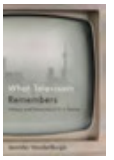
He cites the example of Deh-e-Begh village, outside Kandahar City, where CAF personnel conducted offensive operations and destroyed enemy forces while establishing security for civilians and local government, thereby accelerating humanitarian aid and economic development. CAF initiatives such as these "were considered a success … and provided a template for operations elsewhere," Borys claims, adding that the mission also "engendered cultural change within the Canadian Armed Forces [and] enhanced [its] standing within NATO." At the same time, it helped to shed "the decades-long, blue-helmeted peacekeeper myth."

This compilation of the efforts Canadian armed servicewomen and servicemen over the past 150 years prompts a logical conclusion: that a force that has routinely "done more with less" will need more consistent, reliable support from the public, politicians, and its military leaders — at least if it's expected to punch above its weight into the future. Borys concludes: "Defence is not an expense; it is an asset."

Reviewed by **Ted Barris**, whose latest book, *Battle of Britain: Canadian Airmen in Their Finest Hour*, is published by Sutherland House Books.

MORE BOOKS

What Television Remembers: Artifacts and Footprints of TV in Toronto
by Jennifer VanderBurgh
McGill-Queen's University Press, 248 pages, $37.95



Jennifer VanderBurgh asserts in this book that "television knows more, remembers more, and does more" than is usually recognized. Since their earliest days, television programs have both reflected and shaped culture.

The author, an associate professor at Saint Mary's University in Halifax and the daughter of a CBC producer, explores the long relationship between television, particularly the CBC, and the city of Toronto. She argues that, from the 1960s to the 1980s, CBC's Toronto-based dramas attempted to reach a national audience by having the city stand in for the idea of Canada as a collectivity. But this shifted in the 1990s to an emphasis on dramas that depicted a city of diverse individuals, "reflecting a more globally ubiquitous understanding of urbanity."

VanderBurgh is writing for her fellow academics, so *What Television Remembers* is not for anyone looking for a popular history of broadcasting in this country. There are mentions of controversial thinkers such as Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, French philosophers Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, and Canadian philosopher and media theorist Marshall McLuhan, and there are quotes from experts such as an "urban semiotician" and a "media scholar."

But there are also fascinating glimpses into the ways television has marked various stages in the evolution of Canada, as the medium itself has developed. Sales of television sets jumped in 1953, in anticipation of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation — although a brand-new television set then cost twelve to fourteen per cent of the average annual household income.

The newly established CBC won the North American race to broadcast the ceremony by rushing the BBC's film via helicopter, jet, and then fighter plane from England to Canada for a rebroadcast only seven and a half hours after the event. (The technology for transatlantic broadcasts had not yet been developed.) The coronation, writes VanderBurgh, "consolidated national networks as well as local and transnational social identities." — *Charlotte Gray*

Famous for a Time: Forgotten Giants of Canadian Sports
by Jason Wilson and Richard M. Reid
Dundurn Press, 263 pages, $26.99

Jason Wilson and Richard M. Reid's *Famous for a Time* is an engaging and accessible anthology that explores the lives of some of Canada's most remarkable athletes from the 1800s and the first part of the twentieth century, including the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games.

Wilson, a professor of history at the University of Guelph, in Ontario, and Reid, a professor emeritus at the same university, highlight the constraints these athletes faced. Through the lens of sports, they pay particular attention to the impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples, revealing how arbitrary constructs were introduced under the guise of creating a more "scientific" approach to various games.

Their book narrates the evolution of the sportsperson as a profession — a unique career intricately linked to a pervasive betting culture, where even judges of sporting events placed bets on certain athletes, often favouring one competitor over another. Betting culture was also a significant factor in baseball's rise to popularity over the slower-paced game of cricket, which struggled to shed its image as a gentleman's game.

The authors mention the ways shifting gender norms were brought about by the rising popularity of

TOP: UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORICAL POSTCARD AND PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS COLLECTION, BC 1456.62.32. LOWER LEFT: DEPT. OF NATIONAL DEFENCE/LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA/PA-037467. LOWER RIGHT: IMAGE B-09610 COURTESY OF THE ROYAL BC MUSEUM, BC ARCHIVES

WEST COAST STORYTELLING Celebrating its recent fiftieth anniversary, Harbour Publishing has released the fifth compilation of the Raincoast Chronicles series that portrays life and work on the B.C. coast. *Raincoast Chronicles Fifth Five* (711 pages, $60) is a collector's edition that includes historian Jean Barman's monograph on gold rush fortune seeker "Portuguese Joe" Silvey. Also part of this compilation are volumes of the series about West Coast shipwrecks, outstanding volunteers in a variety of fields, and an adventurous family that lived with pet cougars – plus other stories, poems, and photographs that depict aspects of British Columbia's history. The top image, from a story about a logger known only as "Eight-Day Wilson," shows a crew in the Queen Charlotte Islands (now Haida Gwaii) felling spruce for airplane construction during the First World War. Above left, confiscated Japanese-Canadian fishing vessels are held at the Annieville Dike on the Fraser River circa 1941–42. Above right, painter Emily Carr sits in the door of her caravan, which she called "the Elephant," accompanied by friends and her animals circa the 1930s.

different sports, particularly cycling. The resilience of the athletes whose stories the authors tell — many of them non-white and from poorer families — reflects their capacities to navigate adverse circumstances and their determination to make sports a viable career. — *Aadya Arora*

When Heroes Become Villains: Helmcken, Trutch, Bowser, and the Streets, Lakes, and Towns Named After Them
by Jon Bartlett and Brian Robertson
New Star Books, 100 pages, $18

The three B.C. historical figures examined in this slim book may not be household names to most Canadians, but they do represent a conundrum — what to do when a place is named after someone with a complicated legacy?

Joseph Trutch, John Sebastian Helmcken, and William J. Bowser were big men of influence back when British Columbia was being settled and developed. But, like other movers and shakers of their time, they ignored or mistreated people on the margins, such as Indigenous people, the working class, and immigrants. "Many of these 'heroes' now look like racists and sociopaths," state the authors.

No one wants their street named after a villain, but renaming said street — or waterfall, or lake, or town — is obviously inconvenient. And it can be shockingly pricey. The cost of renaming Dundas Street in Toronto, for instance, was pegged at $6 million. Who decides which names to change and what the new names should be? (Hint: Stop naming places after people.)

When Heroes Become Villains addresses the naming issue in a straightforward manner and is an easy read with good illustrations. The backstories of the men — British imperialists to the core — are fascinating. While Trutch and Bowser come across as typically ambitious and self-serving, Helmcken, the speaker of the provincial legislature, was by all accounts a skilled and kindly physician.

Nevertheless, Helmcken refused to address a smallpox epidemic in 1862, leading to the deaths of tens of thousands of Indigenous people. The authors figure that it would cost about $150,000 to rename the streets named after Helmcken in Vancouver and Victoria — and that's probably worth the money. — *Nelle Oosterom*

Cape Breton in the Long Twentieth Century: Formations and Legacies of Industrial Capitalism
edited by Lachlan MacKinnon and Andrew Parnaby
AU Press, 372 pages, $44.99

The industrial boom that reshaped the cultural landscape of Cape Breton Island in the late nineteenth century was as profound as it was short-lived. *Cape Breton in the Long Twentieth Century* considers the periods of industrialization and deindustrialization the island experienced over the course of more than an actual century, analyzing how these processes determined people's lives and experiences.

The collection of essays is edited by two associate professors of history at Cape Breton University: Lachlan MacKinnon, who is the Canada Research Chair in Post-industrial Communities, and Andrew Parnaby, the university's dean of Arts and Social Sciences.

The "long" twentieth century covered in the book encompasses the growth of the coal and steel industries beginning in the 1860s and continues up to the decline of those industries in the early 2000s. A first section entitled "Formations" includes essays analyzing the political forces that drove industrialization and the society they shaped, while the book's second part, entitled "Legacies," tracks the cultural effects of rapid deindustrialization.

The contributors situate Cape Breton within a network of political and social influences. For example, in his essay "Empire, Colonial Enterprise, and Speculation: Cape Breton's Coal Boom of the 1860s," Don Nerbas focuses on the coal industry's development in the context of an interconnected Atlantic world influenced by Canadian, American, and British interests.

Taken together, the essays offer an in-depth look at the diverse Cape Breton communities that have been affected by the ebb and flow of industrial capital. — *Nicholas Hamilton*

Clara at the Door with a Revolver: The Scandalous Black Suspect, the Exemplary White Son, and the Murder That Shocked Toronto
by Carolyn Whitzman
UBC Press, 333 pages, $24.95

A book like this is a great reminder that the good old days were only good for a very select few. If you were non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual, or even non-Protestant, Toronto in the late 1800s was not a place where you could expect fairness, much less justice. While at least Clara Ford was Protestant, she was also Black and — whatever pronouns she might have used today — she preferred the company of women.

This enjoyable, carefully documented book sets the context for Ford's sensational trial in the 1894 shooting of white, middle-class, eighteen-year-old Frank Westwood, who died of his wounds within days. Author Carolyn Whitzman describes facts-optional newspaper reporting, teeming slums and lakeside mansions, a thriving community we'd now describe as LGBTQ+, and much more.

The details of the flimsy case against Ford and the duress under which she confessed are offset somewhat by the staunch support she garnered in the community and in the press. It makes for an engaging and thought-provoking book that prompts readers to reflect on the cruelty of previous times from the perspective of our more open-minded yet nonetheless imperfect present. — *Nancy Payne*

Well treated

This photograph labelled "Fumigating Peanuts" was taken in Hamilton on June 3, 1944. At that time, my father, Harold Lees (second from the top on the ladder to the right), owned a small fumigating business that was hired to treat a trainload of peanuts.

His note on the back of the photo indicates that the gas they used was methyl bromide, at a rate of ten pounds (4.5 kilograms) per railcar. "We had complete success in 102 cars out of 102," he wrote proudly, adding that the Dominion inspector, Mr. Munro, said the job was more than highly successful — "it was remarkable."

My brother, Gene Lees, then sixteen, stands directly behind the pyramid of cans. He went on to a distinguished career as a writer, lyricist, and music critic. What became of the 102 carloads of fumigated peanuts is not known, but methyl bromide — an ozone-depleting substance — is no longer widely used as a fumigant.

Submitted by Victoria Lees of Montreal.

Do you have a black-and-white or colour photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If so, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o Canada's History, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9. Or email your photo to album@CanadasHistory.ca. Please provide a brief description of the photo, including its date and location, details about people appearing in the photograph, and further information about the event or situation illustrated. Photos may be adjusted for presentation in the magazine.

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Featuring two of the most scenic rail journeys in Canada

Wednesday June 4 to Tuesday June 17, 2025

Round trip from Toronto or Winnipeg to Northern BC's Pacific coast, this comprehensive 14-day, 13-night tour allows guests to experience the country's heritage, size and scenery, including the Canadian Shield, Prairies, Rocky and Coastal Mountains, Bulkley Canyon, Fraser and Skeena Rivers, quadruple Kitselas Tunnels and more. Travel to Jasper on VIA Rail's *Canadian*, enjoying sleeping car spaces, dome cars, and meals in the dining car prepared by VIA's chefs. Then travel the *Jasper–Prince Rupert* train for 2 days in each direction, enjoying the views of the Rocky and Coastal mountains from the big windows at your seat, or from the dome car. With all-daylight travel through the mountains and hotel stays at night, enjoy more mountain views by rail than you thought possible! Includes hotel stays for 3 nights in Jasper, plus 2 nights each in Prince George and Prince Rupert, Maligne Lake Boat Tour, visits to the Columbia Icefields, North Pacific Cannery Historic Site, Cow's Bay shopping district, and Museum of Northern BC, plus a tour guide, info kit and more.

Please call for Double or Single occupancy pricing. FINAL PAYMENT DEADLINE APRIL 15, 2025

Superior Colours & Heritage of Northern Ontario Tour

Book early on this tour to enjoy Northern Ontario's heritage and scenery

Sunday October 5 to Thursday October 9, 2025

Reserve now for the fall of 2025 on this popular 5-day, 4-night fall colours tour from Toronto to Sudbury, Ontario, on VIA Rail's dome car *The Canadian* for some great fall foliage viewing through the Muskoka region. This exclusive package features all-daylight travel with hotel stays each night, plus 2 full travel days on VIA Rail's Sudbury to White River remote rail service or Rail Diesel Car (like a large bus on the rails and the last of its kind in Ontario!) to see some pristine parts of the Canadian Shield in the fall. Also includes visits to learn about the mining history and topography of the region, Northern Ontario Railway Museum, and White River Museum to enjoy "A Bear named Winnie" presentation, where this now famous bear cub was first adopted. The final day will be travelling from Sudbury by motor coach, providing the opportunity to tour the Coldwater Heritage Village and Woodrow Homestead. Package includes most meals, plus additional heritage presentations, tour director, detailed tour info kit and more.

Price $1,595.00 CDN + HST (Per Person Double Occupancy. Single supplement $600.00)
FINAL PAYMENT DEADLINE AUGUST 15, 2025

Manitoba Heritage, Hudson Bay Buggies & Bears

Enjoy the amazing heritage and wildlife of Northern Manitoba

Late October 2025 (dates TBA) – Round trip from Winnipeg

Travelling to Churchill by rail, this 7-day, 6-night tour combines the annual polar bear migration with the heritage of Northern Manitoba. Provided with sleeping car accommodation, guests will enjoy views of the passing prairies, Canadian Shield, Taiga and Arctic biomes from the train windows! Includes 3 days and 2 nights in Churchill with the highlight being a full day on the world-famous Tundra Buggy wildlife excursion. Enjoy a town orientation and Cape Merry National Historic Site tour and a half-day outing along the shoreline of Hudson Bay to look for wildlife and learn about the area's ecology and history with local guides. Visit the Itsanitaq Museum, Parks Canada Interpretive Centre, and enjoy heritage & cultural presentations. Includes most meals, a detailed tour information kit, and more.

Please call for dates and pricing for travel in train section/berths or train cabin(s)-2.
Full payment due September 13, 2025

CANADA'S HISTORY

Suggested pre- and post-tour nights at hotels usually located close to the train stations can be booked for you depending on availability. Prices shown do not include applicable taxes.

More details on the above at CanadasHistory.ca/travel. To book your space or for more details call RAIL TRAVEL TOURS toll-free at 1-866-704-3528

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